



SLAUGHTER AND MAY

Children's and Young People's Writing in 2012

Findings from the National Literacy Trust's annual literacy survey

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Words for life

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Young people's writing in 2012

This report outlines findings that relate to writing, taken from our third annual literacy survey¹, which we conducted in November/December 2012. 34,910 young people aged 8 to 16 participated.

Our annual survey provides us with a regular opportunity to explore the centrality of writing in young people's lives. More specifically, it explores how much young people enjoy writing, how good they think they are, how often they write, what types of materials they write and how they feel about writing. For information about findings from our 2011 annual literacy survey see: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/3536/Young_people_s_writing_in_2011-final.pdf

Some of the key findings for 2012 include:

- 44.1% of children and young people enjoy writing either “very much” or “quite a lot”; 14.8% of children and young people do not enjoy writing at all (see **Table 6, p. 19**).
- 86.7% of children and young people rate themselves as either average (58.2%) or very good writers (28.5%) (see **Table 7, p. 20**).
- 26.7% of children and young people write outside of class every day, with another 28.9% writing something a few times a week. However, 25.7% of children and young people say that they rarely or never write outside of class (see **Table 8, p. 21**).
- Technology-based formats, such as text messages (72.4%) and messages on social networking sites (52.3%) are most commonly written outside of class by a large margin, followed by emails (46.5%) and instant messages (45.2%). Notes (33.2%) and lyrics (26.9%) are the most frequently written non-technology formats (see **Table 9, p. 22**).
- Most children and young people thought positively about writing (see **Tables 10.1 to 10.11, pp. 25-37**). 77.8% agree that “the more I write, the better my writing gets”; 75.7% agree that “writing is more fun when you can choose the topic”; 60.3% agree that “a pupil who writes well gets better marks”; 55.8% agree that “if I am good at writing, I’ll get a better job”. 31.0% of children and young people also agree that “writing is cool”. However, 53.7% agree that “it is easier to read than it is to write” and 48.2% agree that “I have trouble deciding what to write”. A quarter of children and young people (26.2%) agree that “if you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar. Gender stereotypes are also relatively prevalent when it comes to writing, with 28.6% agreeing that “girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys”. 16.1% of children and young people agree that “I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write”.

¹ For more information about our annual literacy survey see **Appendix A**

A look at some key issues in 2012

Figures 1 and 2² show that while the proportion of children and young people who write outside class daily has remained stable since 2011, fewer children and young people enjoy writing in 2012 compared with previous years. This is in contrast to trends we have evidenced in reading where the reverse pattern has emerged, with children and young people continuing to enjoy reading as much as they had done in previous years but engaging in daily reading less than they used to.

Figure 1: Proportion of children and young people who enjoy writing in 2010 to 2012

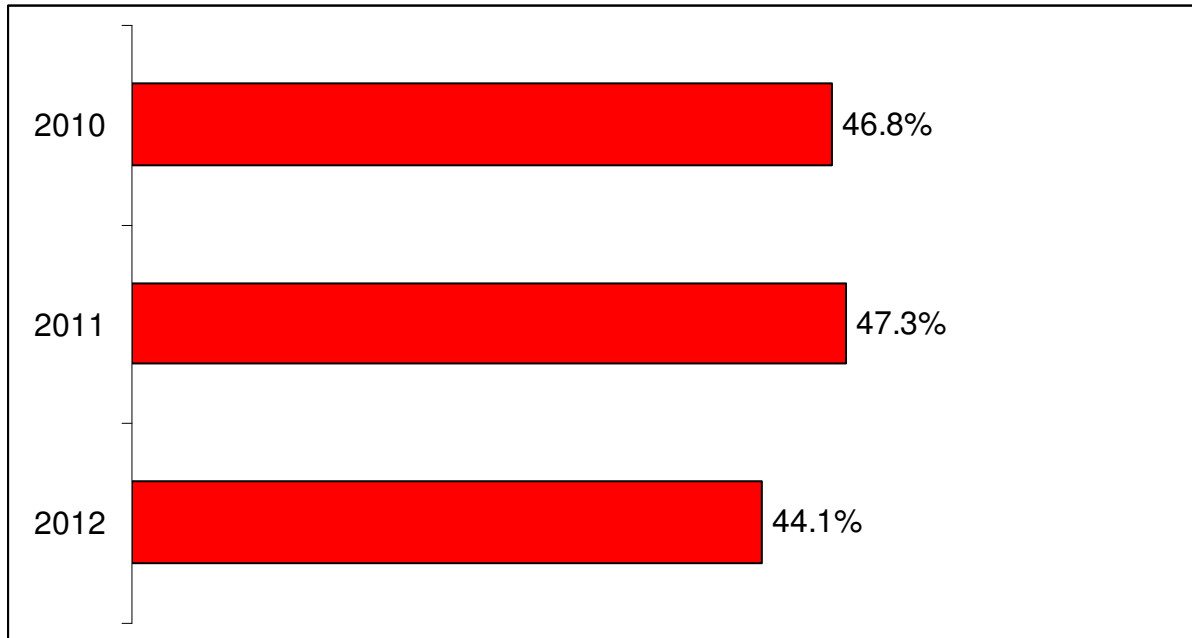
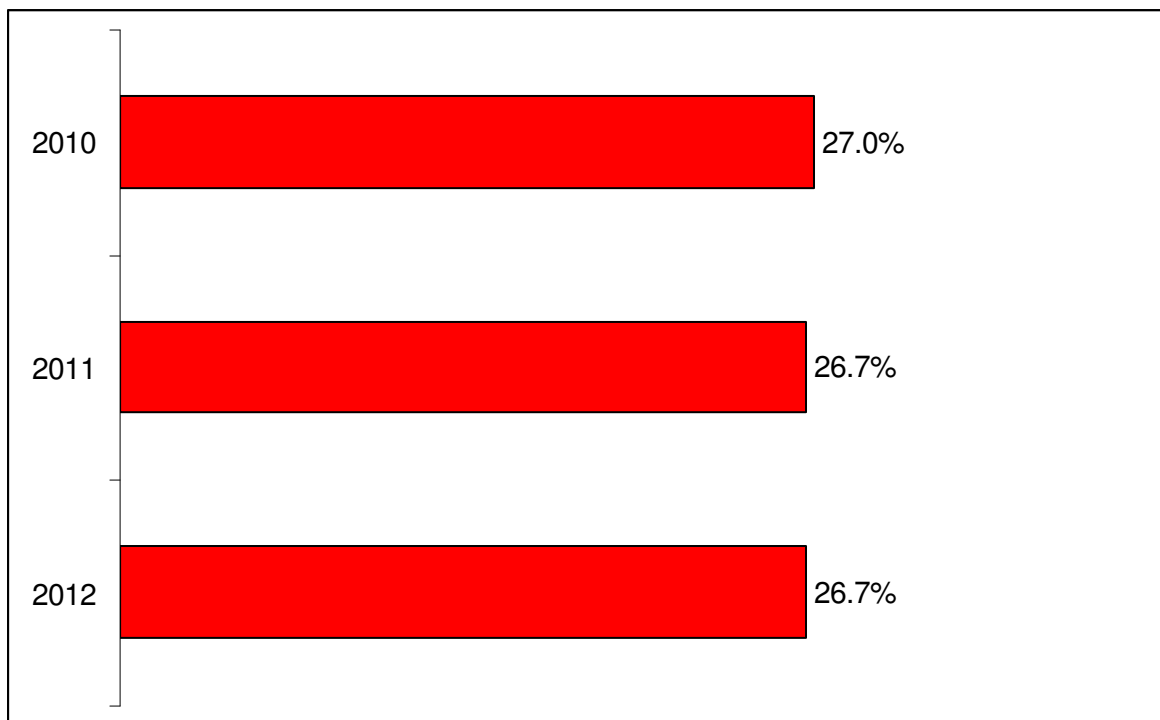


Figure 2: Proportion of children and young people who write daily outside class in 2010 to 2012



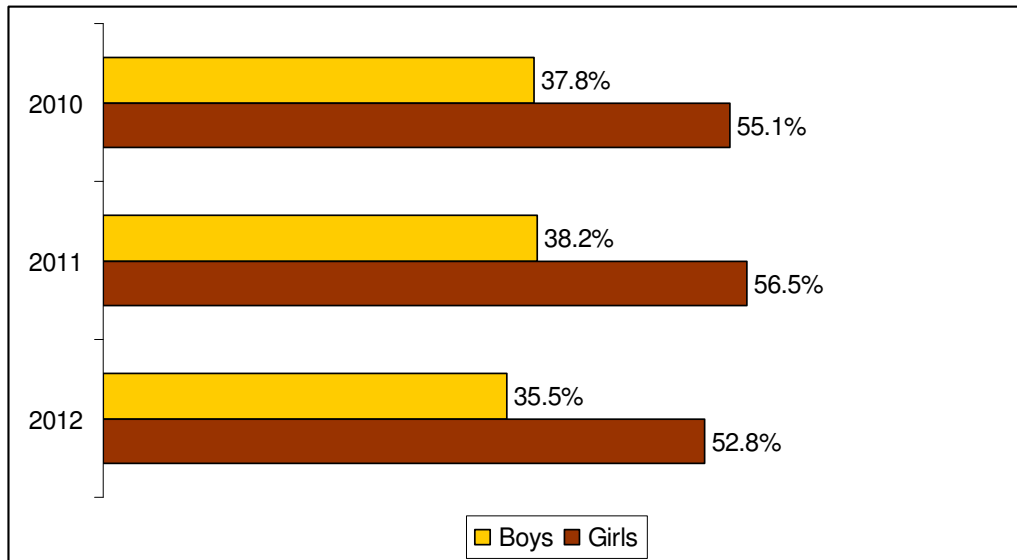
² For more trend analyses see Figures 7 to 11 on pp. 44-47

Girls are more enthusiastic about writing than boys

Girls are nearly twice as likely to enjoy writing very much than boys (19.3% vs. 11.6%), with 52.8% of girls enjoying writing either very much or quite a lot compared with only 35.5% of boys. By contrast, boys are twice as likely to say that they don't enjoy writing at all (20.9% vs. 8.6%).

Figure 3 shows that fewer boys and girls enjoy writing in 2012 than they did in the previous two years. Of the three comparison years, the gap between boys and girls in terms of their enjoyment of writing was widest in 2011 (18.3 percentage point difference). In 2012, the gender gap in enjoyment of writing narrowed slightly to a 17.3 percentage point difference.

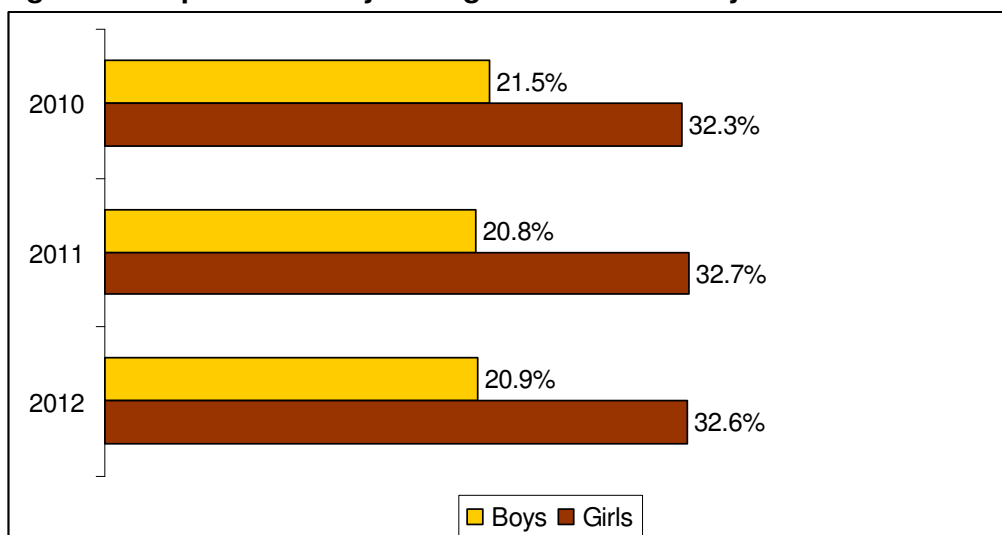
Figure 3: Enjoyment of writing by gender 2010 to 2012



Girls not only enjoy writing considerably more than boys but they also rate themselves as better writers (very good writer: girls 31.4% vs. boys 25.5%). Girls also write more frequently outside of class, with 32.6% of girls saying that they write outside of class every day compared with only 20.9% of boys. Indeed, boys are twice as likely as girls to say that they never write outside of class (9.5% vs. 4.2%).

Figure 4 shows that the proportion of boys and girls who write daily outside of class has remained relatively unchanged compared with 2011. However, the gender gap in daily writing continues to remain wider in 2012 (11.7 percentage point difference) than in 2010 (10.8 percentage point difference).

Figure 4: Proportion of boys and girls who write daily outside of class 2010 to 2012



Compared with boys, girls tend to write more technology-based formats, such as emails, text messages and messages on social networking sites. This is not simply explained by girls having greater access to computers or the internet than boys; our survey showed that roughly the same proportion of boys and girls say they either own a computer (boys 77.0%; girls 77.1%), have access to one (boys 96.7%; girls 97.1%) or have the internet at home (boys 96.7%; girls 97.2%). Furthermore, the writing patterns seem to suggest that creative writing is more the domain of girls. Regardless of technology, girls are more likely to write a variety of formats compared with boys. For example, twice as many girls as boys say that they write lyrics (boys 17.4%; girls 36.5%) and poems (boys 9.7%; girls 16.8%) outside of school, while three times as many girls as boys say that they write in a diary (boys 9.5%; girls 31.5%).

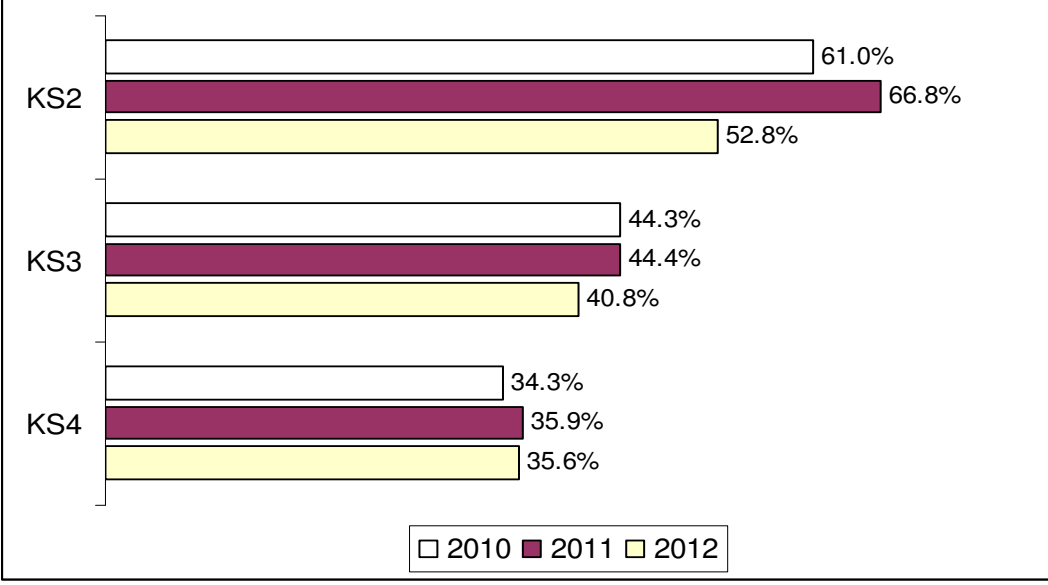
Girls not only enjoy writing more and write more often but they also think more positively about it than boys, with more boys than girls agreeing with the statement that they would be embarrassed if their friends saw them write outside of class (boys 19.5%; girls 12.7%). Boys are also more likely than girls to agree that “if you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar”. Overall, more girls than boys agree that “writing is cool” (boys 26.8%; girls 35.2%).

More attention needs to be paid to Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils but trends at Key Stage 2 are also cause for concern

While boys and their engagement with writing is a cause for concern, an even greater issue continues to be KS4 pupils (14 to 16 years old) and, to a lesser extent, KS3 pupils (11 to 14 years old) too. Although the differences in writing frequency among the key stages are negligible, the differences in terms of their enjoyment of writing are staggering. Only 10.4% of KS4 and 12.0% of KS3 pupils say that they enjoy writing very much compared with 22.2% of KS2 pupils (8 to 11-year-old). Overall only 35.6% of KS4 pupils and 40.8% of KS3 pupils said that they enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot compared with 52.8% of KS2 pupils.

While KS2 pupils are more likely to enjoy writing than their older counterparts, fewer KS2 pupils enjoy writing now compared with the previous two years (see **Figure 5**). This huge drop in enjoyment of writing seems to be confined to KS2 pupils, with writing enjoyment decreasing by 14 percentage points between 2010 and 2012, while it only decreased by 3.6 percentage points among KS3 pupils and 0.3 percentage points among KS4. Whether this marks a general trend or whether it is just a “glitch” remains to be seen.

Figure 5: Proportion of children and young people who enjoy writing in 2010 to 2012 by key stage



KS4 pupils, and to some extent KS3 pupils, are also considerably less likely than KS2 pupils to buy into the power of writing. They are less likely than their younger counterparts to believe in the adage that practice makes perfect as they are less likely to agree that “the more I write, the better my writing gets”. They are also considerably less likely than their younger counterparts to agree that “If I am good at writing, I will get a better job”. KS4 pupils are also half as likely as KS2 pupils to agree that “writing is cool”.

Doubly disadvantaged?

Boys and older pupils tend to be more disengaged from writing in terms of enjoyment and attitudes when compared to girls or younger pupils. However, the issue is amplified if one combines gender and key stages in the analyses and it becomes evident that boys in KS4 present a particular problem with writing engagement.

Only 27.8% of boys in KS4 say that they enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot. This is nearly half the number of KS2 boys who say that they enjoy writing (42.8%) and nearly half the number of girls in KS4 (43.3%).

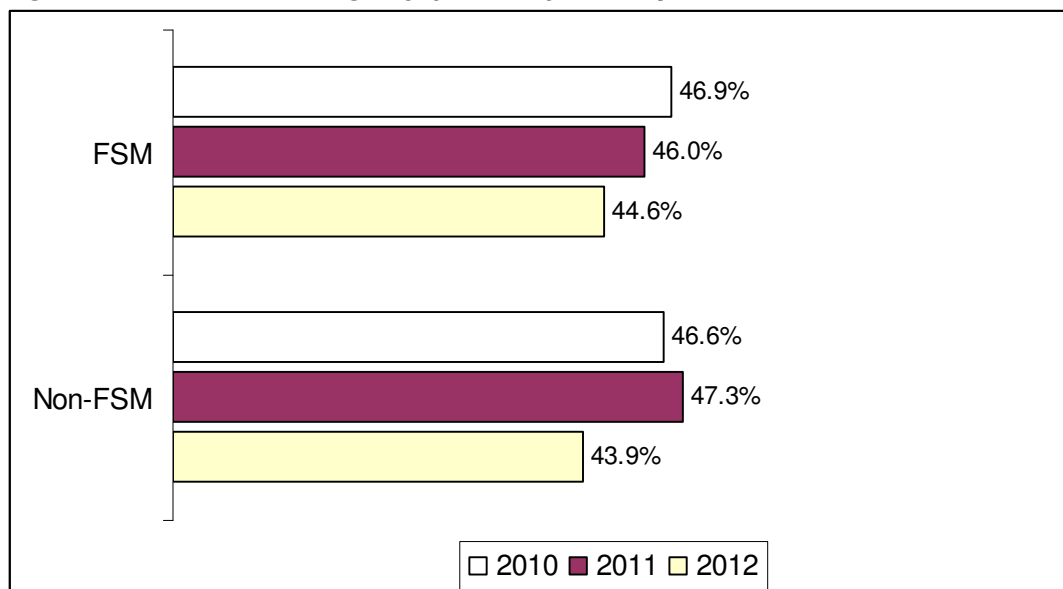
The image of writing as an acceptable activity seems to be a particular issue for older boys. Only 18.9% of boys in KS4 agree with the statement that “writing is cool” compared with 37.5% of boys in KS2.

Linking writing and socio-economic background (using free school meal uptake as a proxy indicator)

National Curriculum test results show that the writing of young people who receive free school meals (FSMs) lags behind those who do not receive meals, at age 7 (end of Key Stage 1³), age 11 (end of Key Stage 2⁴) and age 14 (end of Key Stage 3⁵).

Our survey revealed a complex set of relationships between FSM uptake and writing. Firstly, there was no difference in terms of young people’s enjoyment of writing (FSM pupils 44.6%; non-FSM pupils 43.9%). While there is no significant difference in the degree to which young people who receive FSMs and those who do not receive meals enjoy writing overall, **Figure 6** shows that there has been a subtle reversal of trends since 2011.

Figure 6: Levels of writing enjoyment by FSM uptake in 2010 to 2012



³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167445/main_20text_20_20sfr21-2012.pdf.pdf

⁴ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167380/sfr33-2012v2.pdf.pdf

⁵ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/167430/sfr25-2012ks3.pdf.pdf

While non-FSM pupils were marginally more likely than FSM pupils to enjoy writing in 2011, slightly more FSM pupils than non-FSM pupils enjoy writing in 2012. Overall, the gap in writing enjoyment between the two groups has halved since 2011, decreasing from a 1.3 percentage point difference in 2011 to a 0.7 percentage point difference in 2012. This is because of a larger drop in enjoyment among non-FSM pupils rather than any increase in enjoyment among FSM pupils.

However, differences exist in relation to writing frequency, with young people who receive FSMs being slightly more likely to write outside of class daily compared with those who do not receive meals (28.1% vs. 26.5%). Yet, young people who receive FSMs tend to be less confident about their writing. While roughly the same proportion of young people who receive FSMs and those who do not rate themselves as average writers, young people who receive FSMs are more likely to rate themselves as not very good writers compared with those who do not receive FSMs (17.2% vs. 11.9%).

There were also some notable differences in terms of the types of writing young people do outside of class, with those who do not receive FSMs engaging in more technology-based writing – most notably text messaging – compared with those who receive FSMs (text messages: FSM 65.7%, non-FSM 75.2%). Some of the differences in technology-based writing can, at least in part, be explained by a differing access to computers (FSM pupils 93.9%; non-FSM pupils 97.8%) and the internet at home (FSM pupils 93.2%; non-FSM pupils 98.0%) as well as slight differences in mobile phone ownership (FSM 86.7%, non-FSM 90.1%). Overall, more young people who receive FSMs write lyrics (FSM 32.3%, non-FSM 25.5%), letters (FSM 29.5%, non-FSM 24.7%) and poems (FSM 18.5, non-FSM 11.5%) outside of class compared with young people who do not receive FSMs.

In terms of writing attitudes, the picture is not as straightforward. For example, more young people who receive FSMs agree that “girls enjoy writing more than boys” (FSM 33.0%, non-FSM 27.3%) and agree that if they can use a spellchecker then there is no need for them to learn spelling and grammar (FSM 31.5%, non-FSM 24.8%). However, they are also more likely to agree that “writing is cool” (FSM 37.6%, non-FSM 29.2%) and “If I am good at writing, I’ll get a better job” (FSM 66.0%, non-FSM 55.0%). And despite finding that fewer young people who receive FSMs say that they write text messages outside of class compared with young people who do not receive FSMs, they are more likely to agree that “I write ‘txt’ speak in class” (FSM 22.3%, non-FSM 12.8%).

On the one hand, it is encouraging that young people’s enjoyment of writing, unlike their enjoyment of reading⁶, is by all accounts not hugely affected by their socioeconomic background. However, young people eligible for FSMs are significantly less confident about their own writing ability than other young people, despite engaging in writing more often than young people who do not receive meals. For some reason, enjoyment and greater practice is not translating into higher confidence or higher attainment (see pp. 15) in this instance; and going forward we will attempt to explore the degree to which writing attainment of FSM pupils and non-FSM pupils is differently influenced by enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes, and what other factors might be of importance.

Young people from White backgrounds are the most disengaged with writing

The relationships between writing and ethnic background are complex, and we need to keep in mind that our crude categorisation (made necessary for comparison purposes) undoubtedly hides some important differences within ethnic backgrounds.

With the above caution in mind, it appears that, compared with young people from other ethnic backgrounds, young people from White backgrounds enjoy writing less (White 42.1%; Mixed

⁶ Clark (2013). Children and Young People’s Reading in 2012: Findings from the National Literacy Trust annual survey. London: National Literacy Trust. http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/research/nlt_research/5622

50.9%; Asian 52.8%; Black 53%), and write daily less often (White 26.0%; Mixed 29.6%; Asian 31.1%; Black 29.2%).

They are also more likely to agree that they have trouble deciding what to write (White 49.8%; Mixed 43.3%; Asian 39.1%; Black 44.4%). By contrast, they are less likely to agree with the statement that compared with others, they are a good writer (White 35.9%; Mixed 40.8%; Asian 42.5%; Black 49%) and that writing is cool (White 28.6%; Mixed 37.3%; Asian 41.2%; Black 43.9%). Young people from White backgrounds are also less likely to make a link between writing skills and future employment opportunities (White 54.6%; Mixed 57.1%; Asian 61.7%; Black 62.6%).

However, while more young people from White backgrounds write text messages in a month than young people from other ethnic backgrounds (White 78.7%; Mixed 73.4%; Asian 66.3%; Black 66.1%), they also are less likely to say that they use “txt” speak in class (White 13.9%; Mixed 16.5%; Asian 17.5%; Black 21.2%).

Overall, young people from Black and Asian backgrounds enjoy writing the most, rate themselves as the best writers, write more frequently and write a greater variety of formats.

Linking enjoyment of writing, writing frequency and attitudes towards writing with writing attainment

Our analysis shows that there are clear relationships between enjoyment, attitudes and writing attainment.

Young people who enjoy writing very much are more likely to write above the level expected for their age, with nearly half of young people who enjoy writing very much writing above the expected level, over two-fifths writing at the expected level and only 7% writing below the expected level for their age (see **Table 1**). By contrast and almost like a mirror image, of those young people who do not enjoy writing at all, over half write below the expected level, and two-fifths at the expected level. Only 7% of young people who do not enjoy writing at all write above the level expected for their age⁷.

Table 1: Enjoyment of writing and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Below expected level</i> %	<i>At expected level</i> %	<i>Above expected level</i> %
Very much	6.6	48.6	44.9
Quite a lot	7.6	76.8	15.5
A bit	25.0	69.4	5.6
Not at all	51.7	41.8	6.6

Similarly, young people who write outside of school daily are five times more likely to be writing above the expected level for their age compared with young people who never write outside of school (see **Table 2**). While 24% of young people who write every day write above the level expected for their age, only 7 to 8% of young people who write rarely or never write at that level. Overall, nearly half of those who never write outside of class write below the level expected for their age.

⁷ For more information on our attainment data and for an alternative look at the link with attainment see Attainment Data section on p. 37

Table 2: Writing frequency and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
Every day	13.5	62.5	24.0
A few times a week	15.4	70.7	13.9
About once a week	20.2	69.1	10.6
A few times a month	20.0	70.6	9.4
About once a month	22.9	65.6	11.5
Rarely	33.5	58.9	7.5
Never	46.1	47.2	6.7

Young people who hold more positive attitudes towards writing are also the ones who are more likely to write at or above the level expected for their age compared with those who hold more negative attitudes (see **Table 3**).

Table 3: Percentage agreement and disagreement with attitudinal items and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

		Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
The more I write, the better my writing gets	Agreement	16.2	67.3	16.5
	Disagreement	45.8	45.9	8.4
Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic	Agreement	17.6	66.7	15.7
	Disagreement	37.6	51.1	11.3
A pupil who writes well gets better marks	Agreement	20.1	64.2	15.7
	Disagreement	23.4	62.6	13.9
It is easier to read than it is to write	Agreement	23.4	64.7	11.9
	Disagreement	18.2	62.8	19.0
If I'm good at writing it means I'll get a better job when I grow up	Agreement	17.9	64.3	17.8
	Disagreement	29.7	60.4	9.9
I have trouble deciding what to write	Agreement	28.0	62.0	10.1
	Disagreement	10.4	63.3	26.3

		Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
Compared with others, I am a good writer	Agreement	7.3	62.6	30.1
	Disagreement	56.0	41.2	2.7
Girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys	Agreement	23.9	59.8	16.3
	Disagreement	17.4	66.2	16.4
Writing is cool	Agreement	10.7	61.3	28.0
	Disagreement	34.9	57.7	7.4
I write in "txt" speak in class	Agreement	29.2	54.2	16.7
	Disagreement	16.3	68.4	15.3
I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write	Agreement	29.1	55.7	15.2
	Disagreement	16.4	67.0	16.6
If you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar	Agreement	26.7	58.5	14.5
	Disagreement	15.6	68.0	16.4

Please note that while enjoyment, habits and attitudes are each related to writing attainment, our research design can make no inference about causality: that is, higher attainment may lead to greater writing enjoyment, more frequent writing or more positive writing attitudes; or alternatively higher writing enjoyment, more frequent writing or more positive writing attitudes may lead to higher attainment. Indeed, the relationship might be cyclical. We have set up a longitudinal subsample within our annual literacy survey, which will hopefully give us more information about the direction of associations in the future.

However, regardless of the possible direction of these associations, it is clear that young people who do not enjoy writing, who do not write very often and who, perhaps as a result, do not have good attitudes towards writing are more likely to miss out on the benefits, including better skills and better life opportunities.

There are also clear relationships between enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes. There is a positive relationship between writing enjoyment and writing frequency ($r = .374$), with young people who enjoy writing also writing more frequently. Young people who enjoy writing are less likely to see themselves as not very good writers ($r = -.441$). There is also a positive link between writing enjoyment and attitudes towards writing ($r = .382$) with young people who enjoy writing more also being the ones who think positively about writing.

Table 4 illustrates this in more detail. Twice as many young people who enjoy writing say that they write outside of school every day compared with those who do not enjoy writing. Conversely, four times as many young people who do not enjoy writing say that they rarely or never write outside of school.

Young people who do not enjoy writing are also nine times more likely to rate themselves as not very good writers compared with young people who enjoy writing.

Table 4: Comparing young people who enjoy writing and those who do not in terms of their writing frequency and self-perceived writing ability in 2012

	<i>Write every day</i> %	<i>Write rarely or never</i> %	<i>Not a very good writer</i> %	<i>Average writer</i> %	<i>Very good writer</i> %
Enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot (N = 14,638)	36.8	8.0	3.5	49.5	47.0
Enjoy writing only a bit or not at all (N = 18,569)	18.7	35.9	30.9	65.2	3.8

Table 5 shows that there is also a link with attitudes towards writing. Half of young people who enjoy writing agree that writing is cool compared with only 8.6% of young people who do not enjoy writing. Young people who enjoy writing are also more likely to agree that writing is more fun when one can choose the topic, and to believe that practice makes perfect.

Table 5: Comparing young people who enjoy writing and those who do not in terms of their attitudes towards writing in 2012

	<i>Writing is cool</i>		<i>Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic</i>		<i>The more I write the better I get</i>	
	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %	<i>Agree</i> %	<i>Disagree</i> %
Enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot (N = 14,638)	54.8	8.6	83.1	4.3	88.5	3.1
Enjoy writing only a bit or not at all (N = 18,569)	12.2	40.5	69.9	8.9	69.3	9.4

To sum up, writing enjoyment, writing behaviour and writing attitudes are related and each of these has a positive relationship with writing attainment. In 2011 we published a report that explored the inter-relationships of reading variables and their relative importance in influencing reading attainment⁸. We found that reading enjoyment, which is often just seen as a “secondary” factor, plays a pivotal part in driving reading attainment both indirectly (through its relationship with other reading variables) as well as directly. We will explore whether a similar dynamic also holds true for writing or whether other factors, such as confidence, play a more important role.

⁸ http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/0025/Attainment_attitudes_behaviour_enjoyment-Final.pdf

Young people and writing in 2012 – Data tables

The following pages contain the data tables for each of our writing questions. Each table contains information pertaining to the sample as a whole (top purple row) as well as broken down by demographic background – gender, key stage, free school meal (FSM) uptake and ethnic background⁹. The shaded areas at the bottom of the table contain information where two demographic background variables have been combined to provide a more detailed look into particular subgroups of young people.

Please note that due to rounding, the data in the tables do not necessarily add up to 100 in a row.

⁹ See **Appendix B** and **C** for more information on the demographic breakdown of our 2012 sample

Young people's enjoyment of writing

Table 6: Enjoyment of writing for whole sample in 2012 and broken down by demographic background

How much do you enjoy writing?					
	<i>Very much</i>	<i>Quite a lot</i>	<i>Overall enjoyment</i>	<i>A bit</i>	<i>Not at all</i>
	%	%	%	%	%
All (N = 34,910)	15.4	28.7	44.1	41.1	14.8
Boys (N = 17,618)	11.6	23.9	35.5	43.7	20.9
Girls (N = 17,292)	19.3	33.5	52.8	38.6	8.6
KS2 (N = 12,378)	22.2	30.6	52.8	36.2	11.0
KS3 (N = 15,080)	12.0	28.8	40.8	43.5	15.7
KS4 (N = 6,9310)	10.4	25.2	35.6	45.4	19.0
FSM (N = 5,805)	18.3	26.3	44.6	39.6	15.8
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	14.3	29.6	43.9	41.8	14.2
White (N = 25,185)	14.2	27.9	42.1	42.3	15.5
Mixed (N = 1,660)	18.8	32.1	50.9	36.8	12.2
Asian (N = 3,452)	19.5	33.3	52.8	37.1	10.2
Black (N = 1,222)	24.5	28.5	53.0	34.1	12.9
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	16.9	25.9	42.8	40.9	15.4
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	27.4	35.0	62.4	31.6	5.9
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	9.0	24.1	33.1	45.2	21.7
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	15.3	33.7	49.0	41.7	9.3
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	7.7	20.1	27.8	45.7	26.4
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	13.0	30.2	43.3	45.1	11.6
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	14.5	21.6	36.1	41.0	22.9
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	22.0	30.7	52.8	38.2	9.0
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	10.5	24.7	35.3	44.6	20.1
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	18.2	34.5	52.7	39.0	8.3
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	10.4	22.7	33.1	44.9	22.0
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	18.0	33.2	51.2	39.8	9.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	14.1	30.3	44.4	39.1	16.5
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	23.4	33.9	57.3	34.7	8.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	14.8	29.5	44.3	40.9	14.8
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	24.0	36.9	60.9	33.4	5.7
Boys – Black (N = 613)	21.4	24.5	45.9	35.9	18.2
Girls – Black (N = 609)	27.6	32.6	60.1	32.2	7.6

Young people's self-perceived writing ability

Table 7: Self-reported writing ability for sample as a whole in 2012 and broken down by demographic background

How good a writer do you think you are?			
	<i>Not a very good writer %</i>	<i>Average writer %</i>	<i>Very good writer %</i>
All (N = 34,910)	13.3	58.2	28.5
Boys (N = 17,618)	15.7	58.8	25.5
Girls (N = 17,292)	10.8	57.8	31.4
KS2 (N = 12,378)	12.3	53.9	33.8
KS3 (N = 15,080)	13.3	60.5	26.1
KS4 (N = 6,931)	14.6	61.1	24.3
FSM (N = 5,805)	17.2	56.8	26.0
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	11.9	59.1	29.0
White (N = 25,185)	13.6	59.0	27.4
Mixed (N = 1,660)	9.8	57.5	32.7
Asian (N = 3,452)	11.6	54.4	34.0
Black (N = 1,222)	12.7	52.7	34.6
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	15.2	56.4	28.4
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	9.5	51.5	39.0
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	15.6	60.7	23.8
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	11.0	60.4	28.6
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	16.5	59.1	24.4
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	12.7	63.1	24.2
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	20.5	57.1	22.4
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	14.0	56.6	29.4
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	14.2	59.5	26.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	9.5	58.7	31.8
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	16.2	59.5	24.3
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	11.0	58.4	30.6
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	11.1	59.5	29.4
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	8.5	55.5	36.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	13.4	54.7	31.9
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	9.9	54.1	36.1
Boys – Black (N = 613)	15.5	53.1	31.4
Girls – Black (N = 609)	9.9	52.3	37.8

Young people's writing frequency

Table 8: Writing frequency outside of class in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background

How often do you write outside of class (not counting the stuff you write for school)?							
	<i>Every day</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>About once a week</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All (N = 34,910)	26.7	28.9	10.4	6.9	3.3	16.9	6.8
Boys (N = 17,618)	20.9	26.5	10.9	7.7	3.7	20.7	9.5
Girls (N = 17,292)	32.6	31.3	9.9	6.1	2.9	13.1	4.2
KS2 (N = 12,378)	27.2	30.4	11.2	6.8	3.5	14.2	6.6
KS3 (N = 15,080)	26.8	28.5	10.2	7.4	3.3	17.4	6.4
KS4 (N = 6,931)	25.6	27.3	9.3	6.1	3.3	20.6	7.7
FSM (N = 5,805)	28.1	28.9	10.2	6.0	2.9	15.8	8.0
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	26.5	29.2	10.5	7.1	3.5	17.1	6.2
White (N = 25,185)	26.0	28.4	10.4	7.0	3.4	18.0	6.7
Mixed (N = 1,660)	29.6	29.5	10.5	7.0	3.6	13.6	6.3
Asian (N = 3,452)	31.1	32.0	10.4	5.9	2.8	11.6	6.3
Black (N = 1,222)	29.2	29.5	8.1	7.3	3.2	13.9	8.8
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	19.8	27.3	12.4	7.7	4.4	18.9	9.5
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	34.3	33.5	10.1	5.9	2.7	9.8	3.8
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	21.7	26.4	10.5	8.2	3.5	20.8	8.9
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	32.1	30.7	9.9	6.6	3.0	13.9	3.7
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	20.9	25.7	9.4	6.7	3.3	23.9	10.1
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	30.4	28.8	9.2	5.6	3.3	17.3	5.4
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	21.5	26.1	11.3	6.9	3.4	19.4	11.3
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	34.4	31.6	9.2	5.2	2.4	12.4	4.8
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	21.0	27.0	10.9	7.9	3.8	20.9	8.6
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	32.0	31.4	10.1	6.3	3.1	13.3	3.8
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	20.0	26.0	10.7	7.8	3.8	22.2	9.4
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	32.1	30.9	10.2	6.2	3.0	13.8	3.9
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	24.7	28.2	10.2	8.9	3.9	16.4	7.7
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	34.4	30.8	10.8	5.0	3.2	10.8	4.9
Boys – Asian	25.9	30.2	11.8	6.8	2.9	14.1	8.4

How often do you write outside of class (not counting the stuff you write for school)?

	<i>Every day</i>	<i>A few times a week</i>	<i>About once a week</i>	<i>A few times a month</i>	<i>About once a month</i>	<i>Rarely</i>	<i>Never</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All (N = 34,910)	26.7	28.9	10.4	6.9	3.3	16.9	6.8
(N = 1,705)							
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	36.2	33.8	9.0	4.9	2.7	9.1	4.3
Boys – Black (N = 613)	24.5	27.5	10.6	7.3	3.5	14.8	11.8
Girls – Black (N = 609)	33.9	31.4	5.6	7.3	3.0	13.1	5.8

Young people's formats of writing

Table 9: Formats of writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background (Part 1)

What do you write outside of class at least once a month (not counting stuff you write for school)?							
	<i>Text messages</i>	<i>Social networking messages</i>	<i>Emails</i>	<i>Instant messages</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Twitter</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All	72.4	52.3	46.5	45.2	33.2	28.5	26.9
Boys	67.4	48.6	44.4	40.4	24.3	25.3	17.4
Girls	77.5	56.1	48.7	50.1	42.3	31.8	36.5
KS2	59.7	35.8	39.8	32.2	33.5	15.3	30.4
KS3	79.0	58.5	50.3	51.1	34.2	31.6	26.2
KS4	81.0	68.3	49.7	55.8	31.1	44.6	22.5
FSM	65.7	47.9	40.5	40.5	31.4	26.9	32.3
Non-FSM	75.2	54.3	48.6	47.2	33.9	29.4	25.5
White	78.7	57.3	48.9	47.8	35.1	31.1	27.9
Mixed	73.4	55.4	51.5	51.2	36.6	29.2	33.1
Asian	66.3	45.9	50.9	47.9	35.3	23.4	25.7
Black	66.1	51.0	51.7	47.3	34.4	33.9	38.8
Boys – KS2	54.5	33.9	36.8	28.5	25.6	15.3	19.6
Girls – KS2	64.7	37.5	42.7	35.9	41.1	15.4	40.8
Boys – KS3	73.8	53.6	47.9	44.6	24.4	27.3	16.5
Girls – KS3	84.6	63.7	52.8	58.6	44.5	36.2	36.6
Boys – KS4	75.8	62.8	49.2	52.1	21.8	37.4	15.8
Girls – KS4	86.2	73.9	50.2	59.6	40.7	51.9	29.3
Boys – FSM	60.2	44.6	39.6	35.9	21.9	24.3	22.3
Girls – FSM	71.0	51.8	41.4	44.9	40.5	29.5	42.0
Boys – Non-FSM	70.2	50.5	46.3	42.3	25.0	25.9	16.5
Girls – Non-FSM	80.2	58.1	50.9	52.2	42.9	33.0	34.8
Boys – White	72.9	52.5	46.7	42.3	25.6	27.0	17.4
Girls – White	84.5	62.3	51.1	53.5	44.8	35.3	38.5
Boys – Mixed	70.8	55.6	50.1	48.4	28.3	27.1	24.0
Girls – Mixed	76.1	55.1	52.9	53.9	44.9	31.3	42.1
Boys – Asian	65.6	48.0	49.0	46.0	25.9	24.6	17.8
Girls – Asian	67.0	43.8	52.8	49.7	44.5	22.2	33.4
Boys – Black	61.8	47.8	51.9	43.7	26.9	33.3	29.7
Girls – Black	70.4	54.2	51.6	50.9	41.9	34.5	47.9

Table 9: Formats of writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background (Part 2)

	<i>Letters</i>	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Diary</i>	<i>Poems</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Essays</i>	<i>Reviews</i>
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
All	25.8	20.7	20.4	13.2	14.0	13.5	10.8
Boys	22.4	16.9	9.5	9.7	12.5	12.6	11.1
Girls	29.3	24.6	31.5	16.8	15.6	14.4	10.6
KS2	34.0	27.5	28.0	21.6	13.7	8.9	13.0
KS3	23.1	18.8	17.5	9.4	13.9	13.8	10.2
KS4	17.0	13.3	13.5	6.7	15.0	19.9	8.6
FSM	29.5	22.0	23.0	18.5	14.2	12.3	11.4
Non-FSM	24.7	20.3	19.6	11.5	13.9	14.1	10.6
White	26.5	21.2	20.2	12.4	14.5	13.3	10.5
Mixed	31.0	25.0	27.0	17.6	16.3	15.7	12.7
Asian	28.8	24.6	27.0	19.5	15.2	17.6	16.2
Black	30.9	26.8	29.1	23.4	19.9	22.7	18.3
Boys – KS2	29.5	22.4	14.5	16.1	13.1	8.5	12.1
Girls – KS2	38.4	32.4	41.0	26.9	14.3	9.4	13.7
Boys – KS3	20.1	15.7	7.4	6.5	12.2	13.2	11.1
Girls – KS3	26.3	22.0	28.3	12.5	15.6	14.5	9.2
Boys – KS4	14.9	10.4	5.6	5.5	11.8	17.8	9.4
Girls – KS4	19.1	16.3	21.5	7.9	18.3	22.1	7.7
Boys – FSM	25.5	17.8	11.4	14.1	13.4	10.5	11.0
Girls – FSM	33.4	26.0	34.2	22.9	15.1	14.0	11.7
Boys – Non-FSM	21.6	16.8	9.0	8.3	12.1	13.5	11.1
Girls – Non-FSM	27.9	23.9	30.3	14.6	15.6	14.6	10.1
Boys – White	23.0	17.4	8.9	8.9	12.7	12.5	11.0
Girls – White	30.0	25.0	31.6	15.9	16.4	14.1	10.0
Boys – Mixed	27.5	22.8	13.6	12.3	15.2	15.3	14.4
Girls – Mixed	34.4	27.2	40.3	22.8	17.5	16.1	11.0
Boys – Asian	24.6	18.7	14.1	14.5	14.2	16.7	14.7
Girls – Asian	32.8	30.3	39.5	24.4	16.3	18.5	17.6
Boys – Black	28.7	20.7	17.5	19.6	19.6	18.3	18.4
Girls – Black	33.0	33.0	40.9	27.3	20.2	27.1	18.2

Young people's attitudes towards writing

Table 10.1: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – The more I write the better my writing gets

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	77.8	11.6	6.6	4.0
Boys (N = 17,618)	76.2	12.1	7.8	3.9
Girls (N = 17,292)	79.3	11.2	5.4	4.0
KS2 (N = 12,378)	83.5	7.6	5.0	3.8
KS3 (N = 15,080)	76.9	12.3	6.8	3.9
KS4 (N = 6,931)	70.5	16.5	8.8	4.2
FSM (N = 5,805)	78.2	9.6	7.3	4.9
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	78.0	12.1	6.3	3.6
White (N = 25,185)	77.3	12.3	6.7	3.7
Mixed (N = 1,660)	79.4	9.6	7.2	3.9
Asian (N = 3,452)	82.4	7.7	5.3	4.5
Black (N = 1,222)	78.4	9.8	7.4	4.4
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	81.6	8.2	6.5	3.7
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	85.4	7.0	3.6	4.0
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	76.0	12.6	7.7	3.7
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	77.9	12.1	5.9	4.1
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	68.6	16.6	10.2	4.6
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	72.4	16.4	7.4	3.9
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	76.7	9.6	8.9	4.8
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	79.6	9.6	5.9	4.9
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	76.5	12.5	7.4	3.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	79.5	11.6	5.2	3.6
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	75.9	12.6	8.0	3.5
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	78.6	11.9	5.5	4.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	79.5	9.5	7.2	3.9
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	79.3	9.7	7.1	3.9
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	79.6	8.4	6.6	5.3
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	85.1	7.1	4.1	3.7
Boys – Black (N = 613)	74.6	11.0	8.9	5.5
Girls – Black (N = 609)	81.8	8.7	6.1	3.5

Table 10.2: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	75.7	13.1	6.9	4.4
Boys (N = 17,618)	75.9	12.2	7.6	4.4
Girls (N = 17,292)	75.5	14.0	6.2	4.3
KS2 (N = 12,378)	77.9	10.4	7.1	4.6
KS3 (N = 15,080)	76.7	12.9	6.3	4.0
KS4 (N = 6,931)	70.1	17.8	7.8	4.4
FSM (N = 5,805)	73.4	12.9	8.1	5.6
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	76.6	13.3	6.4	3.8
White (N = 25,185)	76.6	12.9	6.6	3.9
Mixed (N = 1,660)	73.6	15.0	7.5	3.9
Asian (N = 3,452)	73.6	13.5	7.1	5.7
Black (N = 1,222)	72.4	11.3	10.2	6.1
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	78.9	9.3	7.5	4.3
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	77.0	11.4	6.7	5.0
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	77.0	11.7	7.2	4.1
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	76.4	14.2	5.4	4.0
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	68.7	17.8	8.5	5.0
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	71.4	17.8	7.0	3.7
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	72.2	12.5	9.8	5.5
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	74.5	13.3	6.5	5.7
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	77.2	12.2	6.8	3.8
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	76.0	14.3	6.0	3.7
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	77.0	12.0	7.1	3.9
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	76.2	13.8	6.1	4.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	75.3	12.4	8.5	3.9
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	71.9	17.6	6.5	4.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	72.1	12.9	8.8	6.5
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	75.1	14.2	5.7	5.0
Boys – Black (N = 613)	70.7	11.9	11.2	6.2
Girls – Black (N = 609)	74.1	10.7	9.3	6.0

Table 10.3: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – A pupil who writes well gets better marks

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	60.3	20.5	11.9	7.4
Boys (N = 17,618)	63.8	18.5	11.8	5.9
Girls (N = 17,292)	56.8	22.4	12.0	8.9
KS2 (N = 12,378)	60.6	18.1	12.8	8.5
KS3 (N = 15,080)	60.6	21.4	11.1	6.9
KS4 (N = 6,931)	59.2	22.7	11.7	6.3
FSM (N = 5,805)	60.1	18.2	13.5	8.3
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	60.5	21.2	11.5	6.8
White (N = 25,185)	60.2	20.9	11.8	7.1
Mixed (N = 1,660)	60.1	20.1	12.6	7.2
Asian (N = 3,452)	62.0	18.4	12.0	7.7
Black (N = 1,222)	60.4	18.9	12.8	7.9
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	64.8	16.3	12.3	6.6
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	56.6	19.7	13.3	10.4
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	64.7	18.9	11.3	5.2
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	56.4	24.0	11.0	8.6
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	60.7	21.5	11.9	5.8
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	57.8	23.8	11.6	6.8
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	63.3	16.6	12.9	7.2
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	57.1	19.6	13.9	9.4
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	64.2	19.1	11.5	5.2
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	56.9	23.3	11.5	8.3
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	64.1	18.8	11.6	5.5
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	56.2	23.0	12.0	8.8
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	62.9	19.0	12.4	5.7
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	57.4	21.2	12.7	8.7
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	63.2	17.4	12.3	7.0
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	60.7	19.4	11.6	8.3
Boys – Black (N = 613)	62.9	16.4	13.0	7.7
Girls – Black (N = 609)	58.0	21.3	12.6	8.2

Table 10.4: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – It is easier to read than it is to write

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	53.7	25.0	15.0	6.3
Boys (N = 17,618)	59.1	21.7	13.6	5.6
Girls (N = 17,292)	48.3	28.3	16.3	7.1
KS2 (N = 12,378)	56.5	21.9	14.0	7.5
KS3 (N = 15,080)	52.8	25.7	15.7	5.8
KS4 (N = 6,931)	51.0	28.7	14.9	5.4
FSM (N = 5,805)	53.2	22.3	16.7	7.8
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	53.8	25.9	14.7	5.7
White (N = 25,185)	53.2	25.4	15.3	6.1
Mixed (N = 1,660)	54.2	26.0	13.7	6.0
Asian (N = 3,452)	57.0	23.4	13.1	6.6
Black (N = 1,222)	57.1	21.3	14.0	7.6
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	63.1	17.8	12.9	6.2
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	50.4	25.9	15.1	8.7
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	58.6	22.2	14.2	5.0
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	46.8	29.2	17.2	6.7
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	54.4	26.6	13.2	5.8
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	47.6	30.8	16.6	5.0
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	60.5	18.5	14.6	6.4
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	46.3	26.0	18.6	9.1
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	59.1	22.6	13.3	5.1
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	48.5	29.3	16.0	6.2
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	59.1	22.0	13.7	5.3
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	47.3	28.9	16.9	7.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	60.0	22.8	12.2	5.0
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	48.8	29.1	15.2	7.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	61.8	19.8	11.7	6.7
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	52.3	26.8	14.4	6.4
Boys – Black (N = 613)	57.8	19.1	15.7	7.5
Girls – Black (N = 609)	56.8	23.4	12.4	7.7

Table 10.5: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – If I am good at writing, I'll get a better job

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	55.8	24.4	12.2	7.7
Boys (N = 17,618)	57.6	23.0	12.7	6.8
Girls (N = 17,292)	54.0	25.7	11.6	8.6
KS2 (N = 12,378)	60.8	19.9	10.9	8.4
KS3 (N = 15,080)	55.9	25.4	11.2	7.4
KS4 (N = 6,931)	47.4	29.6	16.1	6.9
FSM (N = 5,805)	60.0	20.3	11.3	8.4
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	55.0	25.6	12.3	7.2
White (N = 25,185)	54.6	25.3	12.7	7.4
Mixed (N = 1,660)	57.1	24.8	10.8	7.3
Asian (N = 3,452)	61.7	19.6	10.1	8.6
Black (N = 1,222)	62.6	18.4	9.8	9.2
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	63.3	18.5	11.2	7.0
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	58.5	21.1	10.5	9.8
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	57.6	23.9	11.9	6.5
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	54.2	26.9	10.5	8.4
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	48.5	27.9	16.8	6.8
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	46.3	31.2	15.5	7.1
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	61.5	19.6	11.6	7.4
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	58.7	20.9	11.1	9.3
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	56.9	24.0	12.9	6.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	53.0	27.1	11.7	8.1
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	56.6	23.7	13.4	6.3
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	52.6	27.0	12.0	8.5
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	57.9	26.0	10.6	5.5
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	56.4	23.6	10.9	9.1
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	62.3	18.8	9.9	8.9
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	61.2	20.4	10.2	8.2
Boys – Black (N = 613)	63.8	17.9	9.9	8.4
Girls – Black (N = 609)	61.5	18.9	9.7	9.9

Table 10.6: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – I have trouble deciding what to write

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	48.2	23.8	22.9	5.0
Boys (N = 17,618)	48.8	23.1	23.2	4.8
Girls (N = 17,292)	47.6	24.5	22.6	5.3
KS2 (N = 12,378)	47.4	21.8	24.9	5.9
KS3 (N = 15,080)	48.4	24.6	22.5	4.5
KS4 (N = 6,931)	49.6	25.7	20.2	4.6
FSM (N = 5,805)	50.9	20.4	22.7	6.0
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	47.6	24.8	23.2	4.5
White (N = 25,185)	49.8	23.7	21.8	4.6
Mixed (N = 1,660)	43.3	24.0	24.4	4.3
Asian (N = 3,452)	39.1	25.8	28.5	6.6
Black (N = 1,222)	44.4	21.3	27.2	7.1
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	50.0	20.7	23.6	5.6
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	44.9	22.8	26.2	6.2
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	48.6	23.7	23.5	4.2
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	48.1	25.6	21.5	4.8
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	47.7	25.8	21.9	4.6
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	51.5	25.5	18.5	4.5
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	52.5	19.3	22.8	5.4
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	49.3	21.5	22.5	6.7
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	48.0	24.1	23.7	4.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	47.2	25.5	22.7	4.6
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	50.8	23.0	22.0	4.3
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	48.8	24.5	21.6	5.0
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	44.8	24.0	26.6	4.6
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	49.8	24.0	22.2	4.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	38.9	24.7	29.0	7.4
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	39.3	26.9	28.0	5.8
Boys – Black (N = 613)	43.9	22.3	27.1	6.7
Girls – Black (N = 609)	44.9	20.3	27.3	7.5

Table 10.7: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – Compared to others, I am a good writer

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	37.4	32.9	18.9	10.9
Boys (N = 17,618)	39.6	31.4	20.3	8.7
Girls (N = 17,292)	35.1	34.3	17.4	13.2
KS2 (N = 12,378)	42.9	27.6	17.7	11.9
KS3 (N = 15,080)	35.2	34.9	19.1	10.8
KS4 (N = 6,931)	32.6	37.7	20.3	9.4
FSM (N = 5,805)	39.7	29.0	20.2	11.1
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	37.0	34.1	18.4	10.5
White (N = 25,185)	35.9	33.4	20.0	10.8
Mixed (N = 1,660)	40.8	32.8	16.6	9.8
Asian (N = 3,452)	42.5	31.4	14.2	11.9
Black (N = 1,222)	49.0	26.9	13.2	10.8
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	43.7	27.0	20.2	9.1
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	42.2	28.1	15.2	14.5
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	37.6	33.2	20.6	8.6
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	32.7	36.7	17.5	13.1
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	37.4	35.1	19.6	7.9
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	27.9	40.3	21.0	10.8
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	41.3	28.1	22.2	8.5
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	38.2	29.9	18.3	13.6
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	39.8	32.4	19.6	8.3
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	34.3	35.9	17.2	12.7
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	38.1	32.0	21.5	8.3
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	33.6	34.8	18.4	13.2
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	43.0	32.9	16.8	7.3
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	38.6	32.8	16.3	12.3
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	44.6	28.8	15.5	11.1
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	40.5	33.8	13.0	12.6
Boys – Black (N = 613)	52.6	25.2	13.5	8.7
Girls – Black (N = 609)	45.7	28.5	13.0	12.8

Table 10.9: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – Writing is cool

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	31.0	35.8	26.4	6.8
Boys (N = 17,618)	26.8	34.9	32.4	5.9
Girls (N = 17,292)	35.2	36.6	20.5	7.7
KS2 (N = 12,378)	43.7	27.3	22.4	6.6
KS3 (N = 15,080)	25.2	38.3	24.4	7.1
KS4 (N = 6,931)	21.6	44.9	27.3	6.2
FSM (N = 5,805)	37.6	29.2	26.5	6.6
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	29.2	37.8	26.4	6.6
White (N = 25,185)	28.6	36.9	27.9	6.6
Mixed (N = 1,660)	37.3	33.9	23.0	5.7
Asian (N = 3,452)	41.2	31.7	19.3	7.7
Black (N = 1,222)	43.9	28.1	21.4	6.6
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	37.5	27.8	28.9	5.8
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	49.5	26.9	16.2	7.4
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	22.1	37.0	35.2	5.8
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	28.5	39.6	23.3	8.5
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	18.9	42.5	32.5	6.1
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	24.3	47.2	22.3	6.3
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	32.9	28.5	32.8	5.8
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	42.1	29.8	20.6	7.5
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	25.2	36.8	32.3	5.7
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	33.2	38.8	20.5	7.4
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	24.5	35.9	33.8	5.7
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	32.6	38.0	21.9	7.5
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	31.3	34.9	29.9	4.0
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	43.2	33.0	16.3	7.5
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	36.0	31.7	24.7	7.5
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	46.2	31.7	14.2	14.2
Boys – Black (N = 613)	40.4	27.2	26.4	6.0
Girls – Black (N = 609)	47.1	29.0	16.7	7.2

Table 10.8: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – Girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	28.6	28.7	31.4	11.3
Boys (N = 17,618)	34.1	27.9	27.6	10.4
Girls (N = 17,292)	23.1	29.5	35.2	12.2
KS2 (N = 12,378)	32.1	24.1	32.0	11.9
KS3 (N = 15,080)	27.2	29.9	31.5	11.4
KS4 (N = 6,931)	25.7	34.0	30.0	10.3
FSM (N = 5,805)	33.0	26.0	28.8	12.2
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	27.3	29.7	32.2	10.7
White (N = 25,185)	28.1	29.4	31.5	11.0
Mixed (N = 1,660)	27.4	27.3	33.2	12.0
Asian (N = 3,452)	30.8	26.1	31.0	12.1
Black (N = 1,222)	32.1	24.1	30.6	13.2
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	20.9	16.6	55.7	6.8
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	15.7	17.3	58.2	8.8
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	20.3	20.7	53.0	5.9
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	10.0	20.3	62.5	7.2
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	20.1	24.0	49.6	6.4
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	9.3	21.7	63.7	5.3
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	26.5	19.2	47.5	6.9
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	15.8	18.8	56.3	9.1
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	18.8	20.3	55.1	5.8
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	10.7	19.9	63.0	6.8
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	20.3	20.5	53.4	5.7
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	11.5	20.0	61.6	6.9
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	19.0	18.1	56.6	6.2
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	12.7	18.8	59.9	8.6
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	20.3	18.1	53.3	8.3
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	12.6	17.9	62.3	7.2
Boys – Black (N = 613)	23.9	16.7	51.2	8.3
Girls – Black (N = 609)	14.9	16.6	58.9	9.7

Table 10.8: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – If you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	26.2	17.9	48.5	7.4
Boys (N = 17,618)	30.6	18.1	44.0	7.2
Girls (N = 17,292)	21.7	17.8	52.9	7.6
KS2 (N = 12,378)	27.5	15.9	45.7	10.9
KS3 (N = 15,080)	26.4	18.6	49.0	5.9
KS4 (N = 6,931)	23.7	20.0	51.7	4.5
FSM (N = 5,805)	31.5	17.5	41.2	9.8
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	24.8	18.2	50.7	6.3
White (N = 25,185)	25.8	18.2	49.1	6.9
Mixed (N = 1,660)	28.1	16.8	48.6	6.5
Asian (N = 3,452)	26.0	16.1	48.8	9.1
Black (N = 1,222)	30.5	17.4	43.3	8.8
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	32.5	16.3	40.7	10.4
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	22.8	15.6	50.3	11.3
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	30.5	18.2	45.7	5.6
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	22.2	19.1	52.4	6.3
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	28.7	21.0	45.3	4.9
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	18.9	19.0	58.0	4.0
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	35.3	18.4	36.7	9.5
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	27.8	16.6	45.5	10.1
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	29.6	18.2	46.2	6.0
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	20.1	18.2	55.2	6.5
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	30.4	18.4	44.6	6.6
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	21.3	18.0	53.5	7.2
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	31.6	16.5	45.8	6.1
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	24.8	17.0	51.3	6.9
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	29.8	16.5	43.8	9.9
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	22.5	15.7	53.5	8.4
Boys – Black (N = 613)	37.5	18.4	35.5	8.6
Girls – Black (N = 609)	23.8	16.4	50.8	9.0

Table 10.10: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – I write in “txt” speak in class

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	14.8	13.5	60.0	11.7
Boys (N = 17,618)	16.9	14.7	56.0	12.4
Girls (N = 17,292)	12.7	12.2	63.9	11.1
KS2 (N = 12,378)	17.5	13.2	50.9	18.3
KS3 (N = 15,080)	14.6	14.5	61.8	9.1
KS4 (N = 6,931)	10.5	11.9	71.4	6.1
FSM (N = 5,805)	22.3	15.0	47.4	15.3
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	12.8	13.1	63.9	10.2
White (N = 25,185)	13.9	13.0	62.3	10.8
Mixed (N = 1,660)	16.5	14.4	56.6	12.4
Asian (N = 3,452)	17.5	15.0	52.1	15.4
Black (N = 1,222)	21.2	14.7	51.4	12.8
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	20.3	14.3	46.5	18.9
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	14.9	12.1	55.1	17.9
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	16.3	15.3	58.7	9.7
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	12.9	13.6	65.0	8.5
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	12.6	14.2	66.0	7.2
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	8.5	9.6	76.8	5.1
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	24.8	17.1	43.0	15.1
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	20.0	13.0	51.5	15.5
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	15.0	14.1	60.0	10.9
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	10.8	12.0	67.7	9.5
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	15.9	14.1	58.6	11.4
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	11.9	11.9	66.0	10.2
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	17.5	16.1	53.7	12.7
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	15.6	12.8	59.4	12.2
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	19.5	16.2	47.0	17.3
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	15.5	13.9	57.0	13.6
Boys – Black (N = 613)	26.6	18.5	42.5	12.4
Girls – Black (N = 609)	15.9	10.9	59.9	13.3

Table 10.11: Attitudes towards writing in 2012 for whole sample and broken down by demographic background – I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write

	<i>Overall agreement</i> %	<i>Neither agree nor disagree</i> %	<i>Overall disagreement</i> %	<i>Not sure</i> %
All (N = 34,910)	16.1	18.7	59.1	6.1
Boys (N = 17,618)	19.5	20.1	54.0	6.5
Girls (N = 17,292)	12.7	17.4	64.2	5.7
KS2 (N = 12,378)	17.2	15.0	61.1	6.7
KS3 (N = 15,080)	16.7	20.4	56.7	6.1
KS4 (N = 6,931)	12.8	21.4	61.0	4.7
FSM (N = 5,805)	18.2	15.6	59.9	6.3
Non-FSM (N = 26,654)	15.2	19.5	59.6	5.7
White (N = 25,185)	16.5	19.6	58.0	5.9
Mixed (N = 1,660)	13.6	19.1	62.4	4.9
Asian (N = 3,452)	12.2	13.9	67.2	6.7
Black (N = 1,222)	16.5	11.9	65.6	6.0
Boys – KS2 (N = 6,072)	21.1	16.5	55.2	7.2
Girls – KS2 (N = 6,306)	13.6	13.5	66.5	6.3
Boys – KS3 (N = 7,776)	19.9	21.1	52.6	6.4
Girls – KS3 (N = 7,304)	13.5	19.8	60.9	5.8
Boys – KS4 (N = 3,497)	16.1	23.9	54.7	5.4
Girls – KS4 (N = 3,434)	9.6	19.0	67.3	4.1
Boys – FSM (N = 2,857)	21.8	17.4	54.1	6.7
Girls – FSM (N = 2,948)	14.8	14.0	65.3	5.9
Boys – Non-FSM (N = 13,443)	18.5	20.7	54.6	6.1
Girls – Non-FSM (N = 13,211)	11.9	18.2	64.6	5.2
Boys – White (N = 12,686)	20.0	20.8	53.0	6.2
Girls – White (N = 12,499)	13.1	18.3	62.9	5.7
Boys – Mixed (N = 824)	15.6	21.5	57.2	5.8
Girls – Mixed (N = 836)	11.8	16.8	67.5	4.0
Boys – Asian (N = 1,705)	14.8	15.8	61.2	8.1
Girls – Asian (N = 1,747)	9.7	12.0	72.9	5.4
Boys – Black (N = 613)	22.3	14.1	56.6	7.1
Girls – Black (N = 609)	11.1	9.8	74.0	5.1

Young people and writing in 2012 – Attainment data

Attainment data for writing for 2012 were available for 10,050 **KS2** pupils (aged 8 to 11 in our sample) and **KS3** pupils (aged 11 to 14). Since our attainment data contained a varied set of levels and spanned young people aged 9 to 14, we standardised the data to form three crude categories to be applied to all ages: below expected level for their age, at expected level for their age and above expected level for their age.

In 2012, 8 in 10 young people (78.8%) write at either the expected level for their age (62.2%) or above the expected level for their age (16.6%). However, 2 in 10 (21.1%) write below the expected level for their age. Overall, writing attainment in this sample is lower than the national average (83% achieved the expected level in writing at KS1 and 81% achieved the expected level in writing at KS2 in 2012).

The relationships with writing attainment are displayed in two ways. The first table in each section takes the writing variable as a starting point and explores how it is related to writing attainment. The second table in each section then takes the writing attainment categories as a starting point and explores how each are related to the writing variable.

Writing attainment and young people's enjoyment of writing

Tables 11 and 12 show that there is a clear relationship between writing attainment and enjoyment of writing.

Young people who enjoy writing very much are more likely to write above the level expected for their age, with over two-fifths of young people who enjoy writing very much writing above the expected level, nearly half writing at the expected level and only 6.6% writing below the expected level for their age (see **Table 11**).

By contrast and almost like a mirror image, of those young people who do not enjoy writing at all, half write below the expected level and two-fifths at the expected level. Only 6.6% of young people who do not enjoy writing at all write above the expected level for their age.

Table 11: Enjoyment of writing and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Below expected level %</i>	<i>At expected level %</i>	<i>Above expected level %</i>
Very much	6.6	48.6	44.9
Quite a lot	7.6	76.8	15.5
A bit	25.0	69.4	5.6
Not at all	51.7	41.8	6.6

Similarly, of those young people who write below the expected level for their age nearly half enjoy writing a bit, while over a third don't enjoy writing at all (see **Table 12**). Only 5% of young people who write below the expected level enjoy writing very much compared with ten times as many young people who write above the expected level for their age. Overall, nearly 80% of young people who write above the expected level for their age enjoy writing either very much or quite a lot. However, 15.7% only enjoy writing a bit, while 6.6% of those who write above the expected level do not enjoy writing at all.

Table 12: Writing attainment and enjoyment of writing in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Very much</i> %	<i>Quite a lot</i> %	<i>A bit</i> %	<i>Not at all</i> %
Below expected level	4.8	10.4	48.7	36.1
At expected level	11.6	34.3	44.5	9.6
Above expected level	47.1	30.5	15.7	6.6

Writing attainment and young people's self-perceived writing ability

Table 13 shows that young people's own perceptions of their writing ability generally tend to mirror their actual writing attainment. Of those who did not rate themselves as very good writers, 70.5% write below the level expected for their age, while over a quarter actually write at the expected level. Over half of young people who rate themselves as very good writers write above the expected level for their age, while 44.4% write at the level expected for their age.

Table 13: Self-perceived writing ability and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Below expected level</i> %	<i>At expected level</i> %	<i>Above expected level</i> %
Not a very good writer	70.5	28.8	0.7
Average writer	25.6	65.3	9.1
Very good writer	1.4	44.4	54.2

Similarly, **Table 14** shows that young people who write below the expected level for their age are more likely to say that they are not a very good writer, and those who write at or above the expected level are more likely to say that they are average or very good writers.

Table 14: Writing attainment and self-perceived writing ability in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Not a very good writer</i> %	<i>Average writer</i> %	<i>Very good writer</i> %
Below expected level for their age	57.2	40.0	2.8
At expected level for their age	3.3	75.4	21.3
Above expected level for their age	1.1	17.8	81.1

Writing attainment and young people's writing frequency

Young people's writing skills are related to the frequency with which they write.

Table 15 shows that the proportion of young people who are in the highest achievement category declines as the frequency with which they write outside of class declines. While 24% of young people who write every day write above the level expected for their age, only 7 to 8% of

young people who rarely or never write are at that level. Overall, while nearly half of young people who never write outside of class write at the expected level for their age, a similar proportion write below the expected level for their age.

Table 15: Writing frequency and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
Every day	13.5	62.5	24.0
A few times a week	15.4	70.7	13.9
About once a week	20.2	69.1	10.6
A few times a month	20.0	70.6	9.4
About once a month	22.9	65.6	11.5
Rarely	33.5	58.9	7.5
Never	46.1	47.2	6.7

Similarly, **Table 16** shows that 2.5 times as many young people who write above the expected level write every day compared with young people who write below the expected level for their age. Conversely, young people who write below the expected level for their age were three times more likely to say that they rarely or never write (41.6%) compared with young people who write above the level expected for their age (14.1%).

Table 16: Writing attainment and writing frequency (N = 10,050)

	Every day %	Few times a week %	Once a week %	Few times a month %	Once a month %	Rarely %	Never %
Below expected level	17.2	21.2	10.0	6.5	3.6	26.9	14.7
At expected level	26.0	31.9	11.2	7.6	3.4	15.5	4.4
Above expected level	43.8	27.5	7.5	4.4	2.6	8.7	5.4

Writing attainment and young people's writing formats

Table 17 shows that there are certain types of material that were associated with higher writing attainment. These are writing poems, fiction and reviews outside of class as well as keeping a diary.

Table 17: Types of material written outside of class at least once a month and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Below expected level %</i>	<i>At expected level %</i>	<i>Above expected level %</i>
Text messages	20.1	66.1	13.8
Social networking messages	19.7	66.6	13.7
Emails	18.1	66.3	15.6
Instant messages	18.9	66.5	14.5
Notes	15.9	65.4	18.7
Letters	15.3	62.3	22.3
Lyrics	17.9	61.4	20.4
Fiction	11.1	62.2	26.7
Diary	14.2	62.2	23.6
Poems	14.4	55.9	29.7
Blogs	19.0	60.7	20.4
Essays	13.2	64.8	21.9
Reviews	14.0	60.4	25.6
Twitter	20.1	65.4	14.5

Similarly, **Table 18** shows that young people who write above the level expected for their age are nearly twice as likely to say that they write notes, letters, lyrics, blogs, essays and reviews as young people who write below their expected level, and three times as likely to say that they write fiction, poems and write in a diary outside of class.

Table 18: Writing attainment and formats written outside of class at least once a month in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	<i>Text messages</i>	<i>Social network messages</i>	<i>Emails</i>	<i>Instant messages</i>	<i>Notes</i>	<i>Letters</i>	<i>Lyrics</i>
Below expected level	72.2	51.2	41.9	42.6	26.3	19.6	23.8
At expected level	78.3	57.0	50.4	49.2	35.5	26.3	30.4
Above expected level	71.6	51.4	52.0	47.1	44.8	41.3	29.7

	<i>Fiction</i>	<i>Diary</i>	<i>Poems</i>	<i>Blogs</i>	<i>Essays</i>	<i>Reviews</i>	<i>Twitter</i>
Below expected level	11.5	14.4	9.4	13.2	8.9	7.5	28.4
At expected level	21.0	20.7	12.0	13.9	14.3	10.7	30.4
Above expected level	39.7	34.5	26.0	20.4	21.2	19.8	29.7

Writing attainment and young people's attitudes towards writing

Table 19 shows that young people who hold more positive attitudes towards reading are also the ones who are more likely to read at or above the expected level for their age. For example, a greater proportion of those who agree with the statements "Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic", "The more I write, the better my writing gets", "Compared with others I am a good writer" and "Writing is cool", write above the level expected for their age compared with those who disagree with these statements.

Conversely, a greater proportion of those who agree with the statements "I have trouble deciding what to write", "I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write" and "I write in 'txt' speak in class", write below the level expected for their age compared with those who disagree with those statements.

Table 19: Percentage agreement and disagreement with attitudinal items and writing attainment in 2012 (N = 10,050)

		Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
The more I write, the better my writing gets	Agreement	16.2	67.3	16.5
	Disagreement	45.8	45.9	8.4
Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic	Agreement	17.6	66.7	15.7
	Disagreement	37.6	51.1	11.3
A pupil who writes well gets better marks	Agreement	20.1	64.2	15.7
	Disagreement	23.4	62.6	13.9
It is easier to read than it is to write	Agreement	23.4	64.7	11.9
	Disagreement	18.2	62.8	19.0
If I'm good at writing it means I'll get a better job when I grow up	Agreement	17.9	64.3	17.8
	Disagreement	29.7	60.4	9.9
I have trouble deciding what to write	Agreement	28.0	62.0	10.1
	Disagreement	10.4	63.3	26.3
Compared with others, I am a good writer	Agreement	7.3	62.6	30.1

		Below expected level %	At expected level %	Above expected level %
	Disagreement	56.0	41.2	2.7
Girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys	Agreement	23.9	59.8	16.3
	Disagreement	17.4	66.2	16.4
Writing is cool	Agreement	10.7	61.3	28.0
	Disagreement	34.9	57.7	7.4
I write in "txt" speak in class	Agreement	29.2	54.2	16.7
	Disagreement	16.3	68.4	15.3
I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write	Agreement	29.1	55.7	15.2
	Disagreement	16.4	67.0	16.6
If you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar	Agreement	26.7	58.5	14.5
	Disagreement	15.6	68.0	16.4

Similarly, **Table 20** shows that young people who write above the expected level for their age are more likely than young people who write below the expected level to agree with the statements: "The more I write, the better my writing gets", "Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic", "A pupil who writes well gets better marks", "If I am good at writing, I will get a better job", "Compared with others, I am a good writer" and "Writing is cool". By contrast, young people who write below the expected level were more likely than those who write above the expected level to agree with the statements: "It is easier to read than it is to write", "I have trouble deciding what to write" and "I would be embarrassed if my friends saw me write".

Table 20: Writing attainment and attitudes towards writing in 2012 (N = 10,050)

	The more I write, the better my writing gets		Writing is more fun when you can choose the topic		A pupil who writes well gets better marks		It is easier to read than it is to write	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Below expected level	60.9	14.6	64.2	12.4	58.5	13.4	60.6	13.1
At expected level	81.0	4.7	78.1	5.4	59.8	11.5	53.8	14.5
Above expected level	87.6	3.8	81.3	5.3	64.9	11.3	43.8	19.5

	Being good at writing means I'll get a better job		I have trouble deciding what to write		Compared with others, I am a good writer		Girls tend to enjoy writing more than boys	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Below expected level	48.2	17.5	65.2	11.5	13.2	50.9	32.8	26.3
At expected level	55.4	11.4	46.2	22.4	36.1	12.0	26.3	32.2
Above expected level	67.9	8.3	33.4	20.3	76.8	3.5	31.9	35.3

	Writing is cool		I write in "txt" speak in class		I would be embarrassed if friends saw me write		If you can use a spellchecker there is no point in learning spelling and grammar	
	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
Below expected level	16.0	44.4	20.6	47.3	22.5	46.8	33.7	36.7
At expected level	29.4	23.6	12.3	63.6	13.8	61.3	23.7	51.0
Above expected level	59.1	13.2	16.8	63.0	16.7	67.6	25.9	54.4

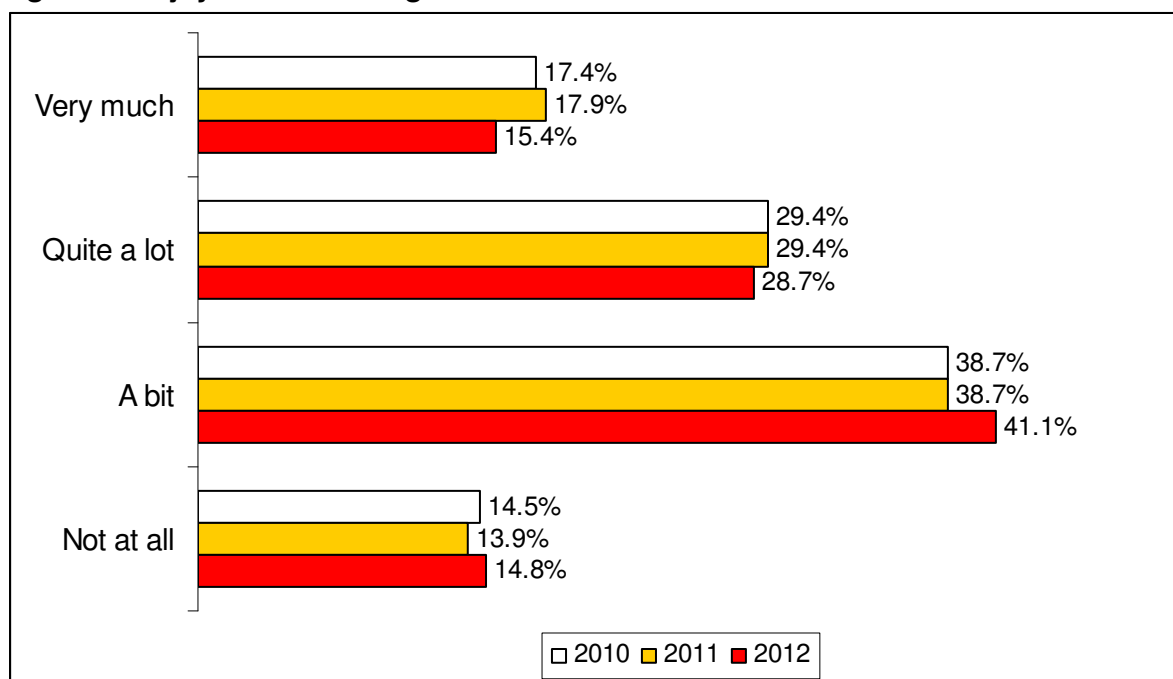
Young people and writing in 2012 – Comparisons 2010 to 2012

This section provides information in graph form to compare broad level data for the sample as a whole from 2012 with the equivalent data from 2010 and 2011¹⁰. It illustrates that while levels of enjoyment of writing, writing frequency and attitudes towards writing had remained comparatively stable in 2010 and 2011, levels changed in 2012.

Enjoyment of writing – Comparative analyses 2010 to 2012

Figure 7 shows that the degree to which young people enjoy writing had remained relatively unchanged between 2010 and 2011. However, the proportion of young people who enjoy writing “very much” decreased by 2.5 percentage points in 2012. Conversely, the proportion of young people who enjoy writing “a bit” increased by roughly the same amount in 2012. These changes are statistically significant.

Figure 7: Enjoyment of writing in 2010 to 2012

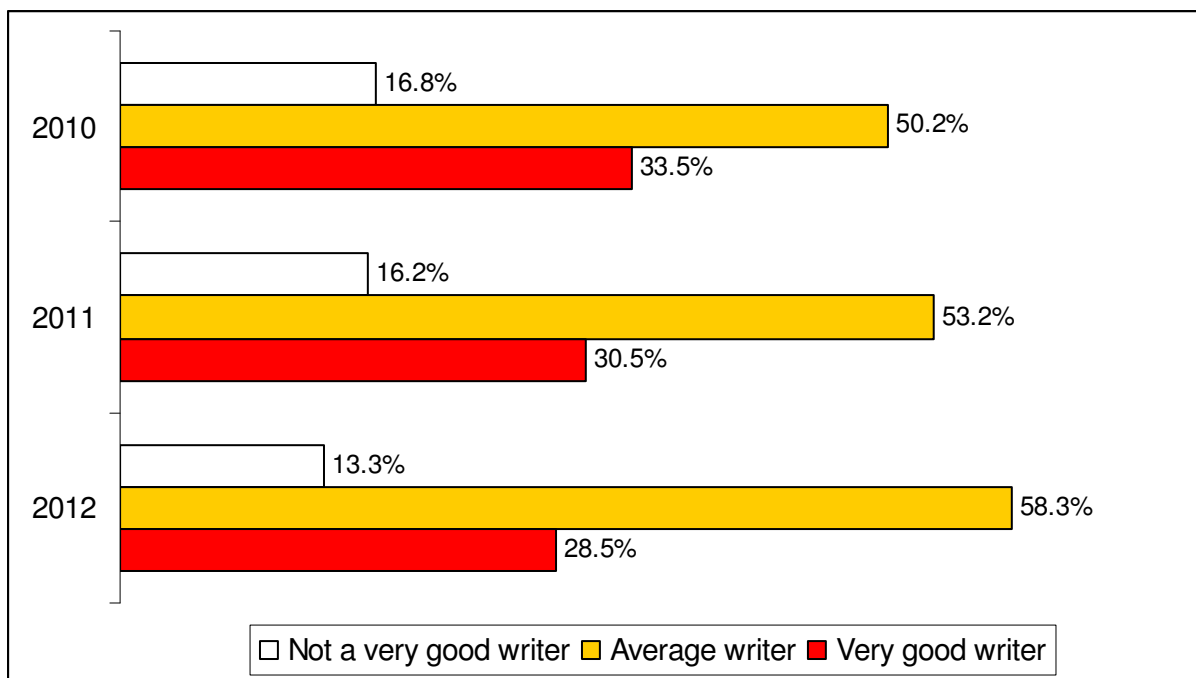


Self-perceived writing ability – Comparative analyses 2010 to 2012

Figure 8 shows that in 2012 a slightly greater proportion of young people saw themselves as an “average writer” compared with young people in 2010 and 2011. Conversely, the proportions of young people who rated themselves to be “very good writers” or “below average writers” decreased slightly in 2012 compared with young people in the previous two years.

¹⁰For 2010 data see here: http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/assets/0001/2778/Attitudes_towards_Writing_2010.pdf

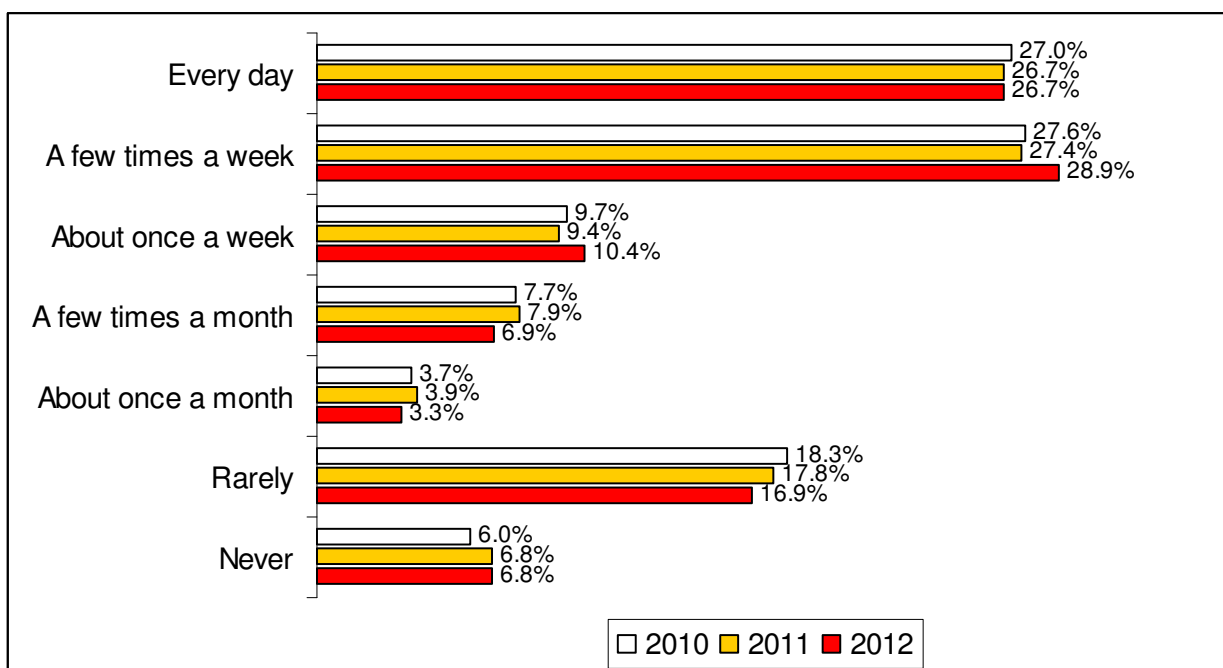
Figure 8: Self-perceived writing ability 2010 to 2012



Writing frequency – Comparative analyses 2010 to 2012

Figure 9 shows that in 2012 slightly more young people wrote something outside of class that was not homework “a few times a week” and “about once a week” compared with young people in 2010 and 2011.

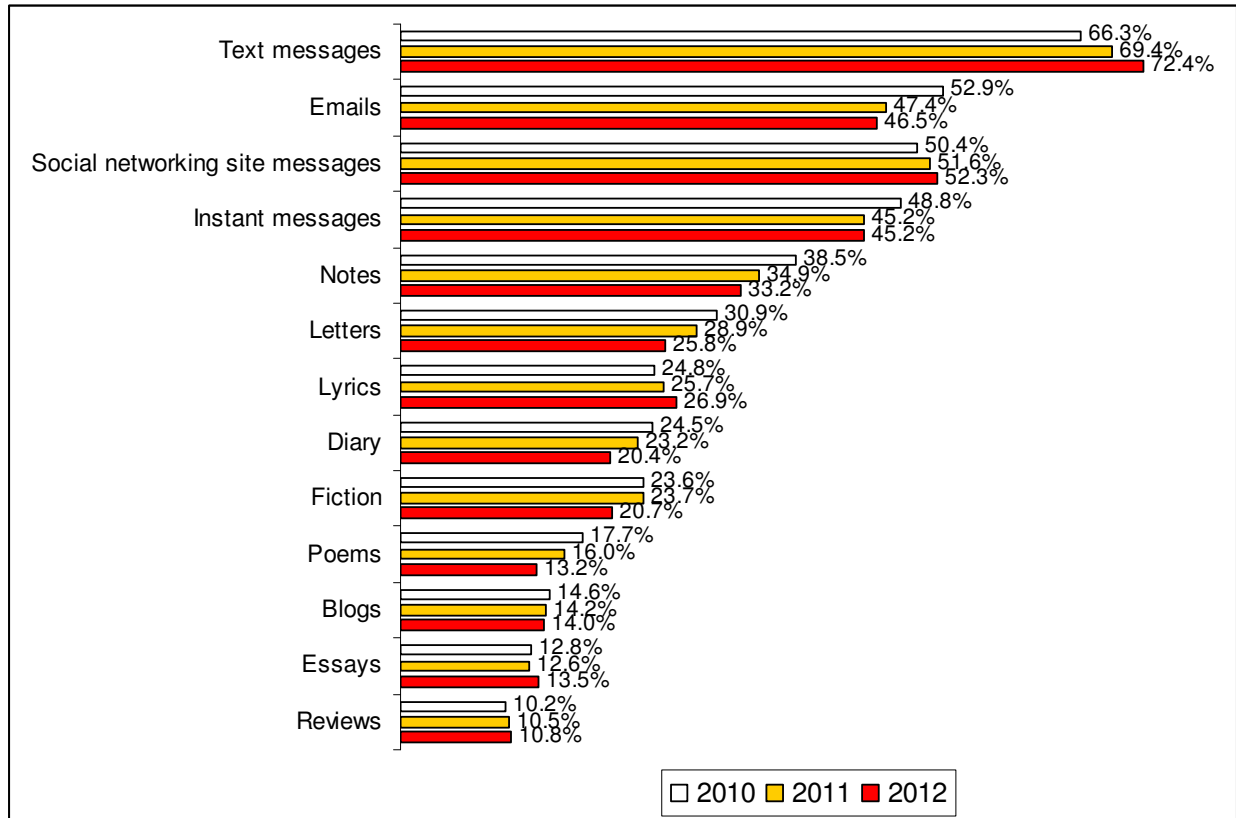
Figure 9: Writing frequency 2010 to 2012



Types of writing outside of class – Comparative analyses 2010 to 2012

There were some noticeable changes in the types of writing done by young people outside of class between 2011 and 2012. **Figure 10** shows that young people in 2012 were slightly more likely to say that they write text messages, messages on social networking sites and lyrics compared with 2011. However, fewer young people in 2012 said that they write emails and instant messages as well as letters, fictions and poems. Fewer young people in 2012 keep a diary compared with young people in 2011.

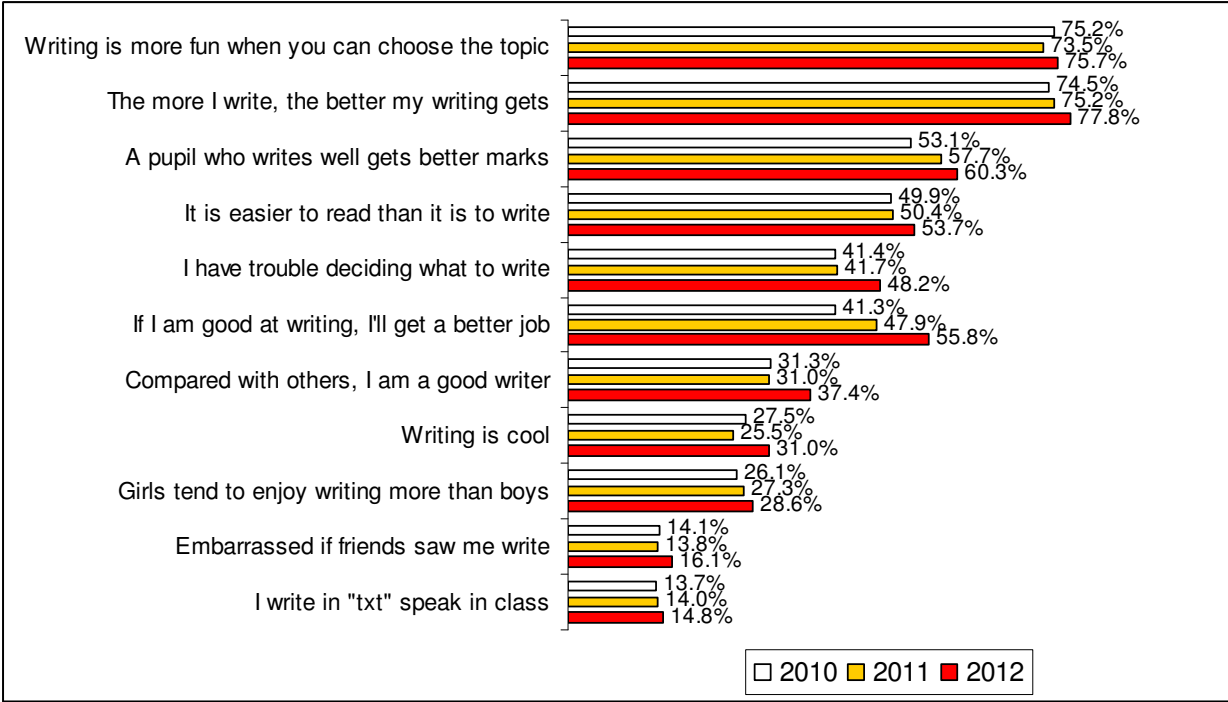
Figure 10: Types of writing 2010 to 2012



Attitudes towards writing – Comparative analyses 2010 to 2012

Figure 11 (overleaf) shows that while most of the attitudes remained relatively stable between 2010 and 2011, young people in 2012 were more likely to agree with the attitudinal statements across the board.

Figure 11: Attitudes towards writing in 2010 to 2012 (% agreement)



Appendix A: An introduction to the annual literacy survey

We have been surveying children and young people on a wide range of literacy issues since 2005. This has given us great insight into children's and young people's views and attitudes on reading, writing, speaking and listening skills, home resources, role models and perception of themselves as readers as well as technology use.

However, what is still lacking in attitudinal research in the UK is annual data on how young people feel about literacy to help us build a continuous picture of their attitudes year-on-year. It is the purpose of the National Literacy Trust annual literacy survey to plug this gap in the evidence base.

Combining previous National Literacy Trust survey topics, the annual literacy survey explores young people's attitudes towards reading, writing and communication skills as well as their technology use. More specifically, the key objectives of the annual literacy survey are to explore:

- Whether young people enjoy reading, how good they think they are at reading, how often they read and for how long, what type of materials they read outside of class, how many books they have in the home and what they think about reading.
- Whether young people enjoy writing, how good a writer they think they are, what makes a good writer, what types of materials they write and what they think about writing.
- What they think good communication skills are, how they feel about them and how important they are to succeed.

One additional area was included in the third annual literacy survey, namely questions addressing the extent to which children and young people use technology in their reading lives.

In addition to exploring children's and young people's attitudes towards reading, writing and communication, we also explore the link to attainment in a subsample of pupils for whom attainment data are available.

These objectives were further broken down into a number of questions including:

- Do reading enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes differ according to gender, age, and socioeconomic and ethnic background?
- Do writing enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes differ according to gender, age, and socioeconomic and ethnic background?
- Do attitudes towards communication skills and their perceived importance differ according to gender, age, and socioeconomic and ethnic background?

Appendix B: Methodology

An invitation to participate in this online survey was sent out in National Literacy Trust newsletters at the beginning of September 2012. Schools were invited to express their interest to participate in one of three surveys:

- 1) A simple survey (without attainment data or name field)
- 2) An amended survey with two attainment questions for pupils to fill in
- 3) An amended survey with a name field, supplemented by the reading and writing attainment data for participating pupils as supplied by the school

The basic online survey consisted of 39 questions exploring young people's background, reading and writing enjoyment, behaviour and attitudes towards communication skills as well as questions to explore digital reading (the latter questions were a special focus for the 2012 survey).

Due to the complexity of the questions and some concepts, the decision was made to restrict the age range of participating pupils to upper Key Stage 2 (9 to 11 years) and older. However, some schools felt that their 8-year-olds would be capable of completing the survey.

303 schools expressed an interest in taking part in one of the three surveys. A link to the online survey alongside guidance notes for teachers was emailed to the schools at the beginning of November. The survey was online between 12 November and 7 December 2012. It took an average of 25 minutes for young people to complete the survey. Schools were offered a school-specific summary report as an incentive to take part.

Participation rate

Of the 303 schools that had originally expressed an interest to take part, 188 participated in our online survey, a participation rate of 62%.

Appendix C: Sample characteristics

Overall, 34,910 young people participated in this survey in November/December 2012. There was an equal gender split in the sample, with 50.5% of respondents being boys (N = 17,618) and 49.5% being girls (N = 17,292).

Table C1 shows that the majority of pupils were 11, 12 and 13 years old. To investigate the impact of age, three broad categories were identified according to key stages: KS2, KS3 and KS4. The KS2 category (36.0%, N = 12,378) refers to pupils aged 7 to 11, KS3 (43.9%, N = 15,080) refers to pupils aged 11 to 14, while KS4 (20.2%, N = 6,931) applies to pupils aged 14 to 16. Although some young people aged 17 (N = 212, 0.6%) and 18 (N = 148, 0.4%) took part too, the sample was too small and they are therefore not part of the analyses by key stage.

Table C1: Sample age

	%	N		%	N
8	2.7	931	13	18.6	6,472
9	5.1	1,763	14	11.1	3,853
10	6.5	2,248	15	6.6	2,360
11	21.4	7,436	16	2.1	718
12	24.8	8,608			

The percentage of pupils who receive free school meals (FSM), which is frequently used in educational research as a crude indicator of socioeconomic background, was 17.9%. The percentage of FSM uptake in this study is on a par with the national average (18.2%¹¹).

When asked how they would describe their ethnic background, most pupils said that they were White British (73.5%, N = 23,171). The second and third most frequent ethnic categories in this sample were Asian or Asian British Pakistani (5.6%, N = 1,765) and White other (3.2%, N = 1,011). See **Table C2** for a full breakdown of ethnic background. Please note that 9.7% (N = 3,391) of the sample chose not to answer this question. Overall, the ethnic make-up of this sample is representative of that found nationally¹².

Table C2: Ethnic background

	%	N
White British	73.5	23,171
White Irish	1.8	565
White Traveller	0.3	107
White Romany	1.1	331
White other	3.2	1,011
Mixed White and Black Caribbean	1.1	353
Mixed White and Black African	0.6	193
Mixed White and Asian	1.4	454

11 <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sfr10-2012.pdf>; primary and secondary. Primary 19.3%, second 16%

12 <http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/s/sfr10-2012.pdf>

	%	N
Mixed other	2.1	658
Asian or Asian British Indian	1.9	611
Asian or Asian British Pakistani	5.6	1,765
Asian or Asian British Bangladeshi	1.7	543
Asian or Asian British Chinese	0.6	177
Asian or Asian British Other	1.1	356
Black Caribbean	0.9	297
Black African	2.1	674
Black other	0.8	251

(based on N = 31,519)

To make comparisons by ethnic group meaningful, we combined the subcategories to form "White", "Mixed", "Asian" and "Black" background categories. While this crude categorisation undoubtedly hides some important differences within ethnic backgrounds, it allowed for general differences to be obtained at this stage.

Regional breakdown

167 were schools from England, 10 from Wales, seven from Scotland and four from Northern Ireland. Seven international English-speaking schools with a UK curriculum also took part. However, data from these international schools are not included in the analyses in this report.