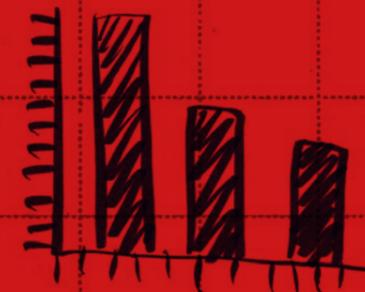


Impact Report 2023/24



Super Power Agency
Registered Scottish Charity: SC046550
www.superpoweragency.com





Hopes, dreams and ambitions on show in the St Thomas of Aquins Girls' Writing Groups

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A Note from The Managing Director

As the 2023/24 academic year comes to a close, I am glad of this chance to reflect on my first year as Managing Director of the Super Power Agency. For the organisation it's been a year of thoughtful reassessment, growth, and laying the foundation for a stronger future and the results are already promising.



In the autumn term of 2023, the Board of Directors and I made a strategic decision to pause our workshops, allowing us time for reflection and forward planning. This period enabled us to critically examine our achievements and reassess the current literacy landscape in Scotland, particularly in light of the post-pandemic challenges facing young learners.

We rebuilt our team, welcoming a new group of dedicated staff and Board members to galvanise our plans. Our website was refreshed, allowing us to introduce an exciting suite of free teacher resources to support classrooms across the country. Most importantly, we established a strong financial foundation through dedicated fundraising and outreach, ensuring our vital work would still be possible for years to come.

January 2024 marked a new beginning. Our workshops were relaunched - capes were back, and our volunteers were more enthusiastic than ever. The classroom buzzed with excitement as we reconnected with our mission: helping young people write their stories. This year, we reached over 1,000 across 18 schools, including,



for the first time, expanding our programmes to Glasgow - a significant milestone for the charity. Volunteer engagement has also flourished, with over 50 new volunteers joining our efforts.

Additionally we've expanded our key partnerships with notable literary organisations, including the National Library of Scotland, Edinburgh City of Literature, and the Borders Book Festival, strengthening our ties to this vibrant literary community..

With the current poverty-related attainment gap in Scotland standing at 20.5%, we know that our approach to tackling this challenge has to be innovative and proactive. Our new three-year strategy reflects this and reinforces our commitment to making a positive impact, with a clear focus on ensuring that no young person is left behind.

As we look forward to the next academic year, I'm excited by the opportunities ahead. With a clear roadmap, strong partnerships, and a passionate team, the Super Power Agency is well-positioned to continue its great work in classrooms across Scotland. We invite our supporters and potential funders to join us in this journey of empowerment through storytelling and writing.

Students at Tynecastle High School writing some amazing adventures.

Our vision and mission

Our Vision

Helping young people write their story.

Our Mission

To improve self-esteem and aspiration via the most fundamental superpower - the ability to write.

Our Aim

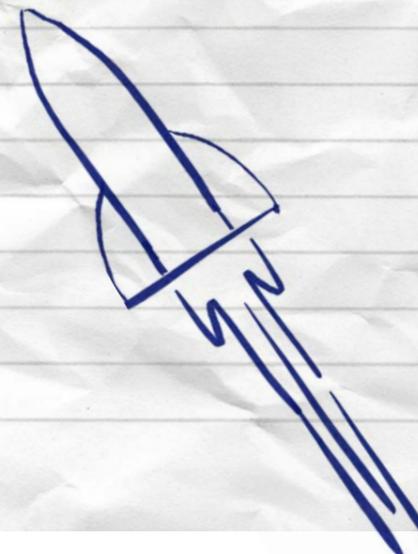
Working in some of Scotland's most disadvantaged and under-resourced areas, we aim to make learning fun. Our workshops encourage and empower young people to put pen to paper, build their writing skills and to express themselves with confidence. In doing so, we hope no young person in Scotland will leave school unable to write.



When I write

When I write I feel like my voice is heard. I have a say and that my opinions matter. I am not just a kid. When I write I feel like I can express myself through words on paper, not letting my voice drown. When I write I feel like I can do anything. It helps to know I can get it all out on paper and that is how I feel when I write!

By Tallulah from Liberton High School





Why it Matters

The Super Power Agency recognises that poverty and illiteracy can go hand in hand, limiting aspirations and opportunities.. As an organisation we focus our efforts in areas that sit high on the Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation which provides a ranking of regions within a city from most deprived to least deprived (based on seven different indicators: income, employment, health, education, skills and training, access to services, crime and housing).

Limited access to vital resources often has a knock-on effect, placing vulnerable young people at a disadvantage for the rest of their lives. Living in poverty is proven to affect a young person's education and employment prospects as well as their mental wellbeing. It's why, outside of our focus on literacy skills, our workshops aim to improve communication, build confidence, encourage the ability to ask for help and, overall, foster ambition.

Our workshops provide opportunities for young people to explore the potential of the written word while strengthening valuable writing skills. During the workshops, participants write and edit their pieces with the help of volunteers who act as listeners and assistant editors. Once the book is published, the participants are

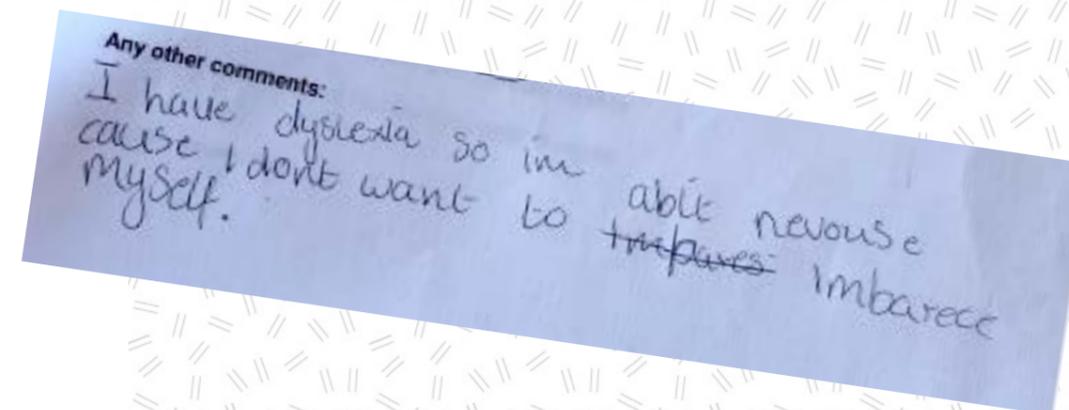


St Thomas of Aquins Girls' Writing Group

given copies. The feeling of accomplishment that comes from having a finished product and being a published author gives a boost to our young participants' self-esteem and confidence. A lasting record of accomplishment for them and their families.

The Super Power Agency is proud to directly align with goals within The Scottish Attainment Challenge 2022/23 – 2025/26 which states:

The mission is to use education to improve outcomes for children and young people impacted by poverty, with a focus on tackling the poverty-related attainment gap.





Super Power Agency

A year in numbers

79%



of young people felt their writing had improved



5

new books of youth writing published

189

workshop hours



18

schools partnered with



1083

young people took part in our workshops



40

unique writing workshops



356

classroom volunteering hours



64

online volunteering hours



97%



of young people said they enjoyed the workshops

5



new school partners this year



148

stories written



16

time the brand Irn Bru was featured

13



frog characters

Countless capes worn



52

new volunteers



5

community partners



2

week-long summer schools



6

new Writing Facilitators

School Programmes

Note from Rebecca Low, Programme Coordinator

It has been a real pleasure and a privilege to read so much inventive and ingenious creative writing by young people this year. From little knights and alien weddings, to personal poems and reflective pieces, we have been blown away by the imagination and hard work shown by these young writers.

With our new Writing Facilitators on board, I'm looking forward to the next school year and the ways that we can diversify the workshops we deliver. In the meantime, we can share some of the fantastic writing that happened in 2023/24.

This session we delivered a range of different workshops in schools, including our 8-week programmes, one-off workshops and a city-wide pilot with P7 pupils from across Edinburgh. All of these workshops shared the same aim: to encourage young people to express their brilliant ideas and build their creative confidence through writing!



New Writing Facilitators

As we expand our programme, working with more schools and community groups year on year, we also want to diversify the range of workshops we can offer. Enter our brand-new team of freelance Writing Facilitators!



In February 2024, we brought on six new writers - poets, performers and playwrights - to facilitate Super Power Agency workshops in schools. Each facilitator uses their own skillset and area of creative expertise to shape their workshops, while bringing fun and energy to the classroom. We look forward to working with them more in the next school year!

Writing Facilitators

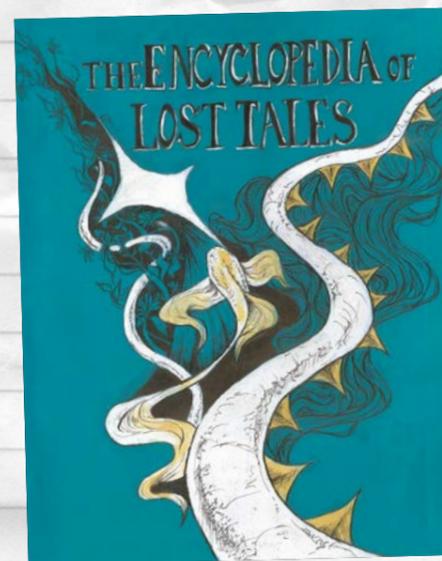
- Linden McMahon
- Colin McGuire
- Georgia Nelson
- Fedor Raatgever
- Lucy Goodwill
- Aimee Skelton



Young Writers, Young Voices

During our Young Writers, Young Voices project, S2-S5 pupils explore a topic or subject allowing them to research, express opinions and build their writing skills. Throughout the 8 weeks they produce a piece of writing that will culminate in the production of a perfect bound book, with a book launch. This is a testament to their hard work which helps bolster the pupils' self-esteem and confidence.

This year we worked with 241 young people during these workshops, producing four new publications of their work.



Broughton High School Myths and Legends

At Broughton High School, we worked with S2 classes on a Myths and Legends project. The pupils took inspiration from existing Scottish myths and legends to write their own magical and mysterious stories. Have you ever wondered where the bagpipes came from, or why Arthur's Seat is no longer an active volcano? The final book, called *The Encyclopedia of Lost Tales*, will give you the answers!

Leith School of Art foundation student Freia Walford designed the cover for this book, as part of our ongoing relationship between LSA and the SPA.

“

Once upon a time there was an active volcano called Arthur's Seat. People were terrified of it, so there were no houses or shops near it (no chippies, either). One day, on New Year's Eve, God was happily celebrating with his friends...it came time to open the champagne and God picked up the huge bottle and opened it. (It was about 1000m in height so it was humongous.)

He opened it and with a pop the cap flew up into the sky, never to be seen again. Little did they know that the cap had flown into the opening of Arthur's Seat with a big 'bump' sound; people woke up to this sound and were very dumbfounded when they climbed up Arthur's Seat, only to find a big plug in the middle of it... ”

From 'Why Arthur's Seat is no longer active'
by Anete K from Broughton High School

Leith Academy Children's Book

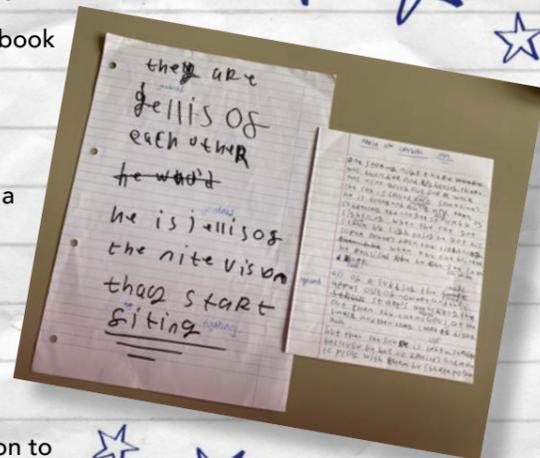
Our Leith Academy S3 group spent 10 weeks working together to write their children's book called *Come on an Adventure with Us*. For this class we worked with a Support for Learning group who had low levels of literacy and needed a lot of individualised support. The pupils created a range of imaginative stories aimed at younger readers, with characters including an alien who lands on Neptune, Ren who is bullied and is looking for a friend, and Max the villainous snake.



In June we celebrated the publication of their book with a very special launch at Argonaut Books in Leith. The young people all chose a book to take home with them, which they told us was the first book any of them had ever bought. It was a fantastic morning and a privilege to celebrate with them.

Over the weeks, with the support of our volunteers, there was a marked improvement in the literacy skills and motivation of all members of this group and can be seen here in writing from week one (left) and week nine (right).

During this project we also worked with two illustration students from Edinburgh College of Art, who attended a session to work alongside the young people to bring their characters to life.



St Thomas of Aquins Girls' Writing Group

This was the first time we have worked with St Thomas of Aquins and it's a partnership we are pleased to be continuing into 2024/25. For 7 weeks, we worked with a group of young women from different year groups, exploring identity and writing about what makes them unique. The girls wrote a variety of reflective pieces and even had a workshop led by poet Colin McGuire!



This group was brought together by the Wellbeing Hub, forming a nurture group. And while there were initial apprehensions about the work, the girls really opened up over the weeks, writing reflective pieces, often of a personal and moving nature.

We will work with a further two groups at St Thomas' during the second half of 2024 and all three groups' writing will be published together later in the year, in a book titled *Tales from St Tams*.



Kaci-Grace you are funny like Ian Stirling.
You are kind and determined.
You're Easter Road Stadium, green apples.
You are Kylie Jenner playing football for Hibs.
You're as powerful as pouring down rain, thunder and lightning.
You are a giraffe dancing on a cow.

Nutella ice cream, delicious, tasty, amazing.
You are a Tenerife all inclusive, eat as much as you want.
Even if it's just cucumber you choose.

You are jumping off the Eiffel Tower and staying alive, Bouncing off a train and running to Blackpool
Kaci-Grace, you are the most determined woman in the world.

You can control what you do.

By Kaci-Grace from St Thomas of Aquins High School



Lewis Buxton X Tynecastle High School

Poet Lewis Buxton reached out to the Super Power Agency to collaborate on a poetry workshop as part of his book tour. In May 2024, S2 pupils from Tynecastle High School worked with Lewis to develop and write their own poems about everything from colourful socks to their pet dog Bruno to feelings of love, anger and joy.

“
Love is a big diving board,
A big commitment and
a scary thing,
However the feeling
after the first jump
Can only be described
as accomplishment.”

By Ede from
Tynecastle
High School



Edinburgh Secret Stories - Our Primary 7 Pilot Project

This February, we launched Edinburgh Secret Stories, a pilot project for Primary 7 pupils across the city. Taking inspiration from previous 'secret message' projects, Edinburgh Secret Stories saw Primary 7 classes in three secondary school communities writing a collaborative story...with a twist! Each class could only read the chapter written by the class before them, nothing else! This resulted in three wild, wacky and incredibly imaginative stories which will be published in an anthology and presented to the pupils when they are in S1.

Through the Secret Stories project, we worked with over 600 pupils in 12 Edinburgh primary schools. These workshops were one-off sessions that were 2-3 hours long and delivered in school. This was a different approach to our longer-term P7 programmes. Going forward we will look to alternate the programmes, with schools doing a Secret Stories project one year and an 8-week programme the next, maximising the impact of our work with this age group.



“

'In the year 2064 the scientists, led by Barry, are planning to head onto an alien spaceship. They are on a quest to find out if aliens are real. Little do they know that Ian, the alien boss, is having a wedding on board the spaceship.

"Who is going to take the first jump?" shouts Barry.

Nobody responds, so Barry is forced to jump first. As he does, he crashes through a window on the alien spaceship and lands at Ian's feet just as he is about to say "I do". Ian is furious!

An ear-splitting scream fills the room as Ian's alien's teeth sink into Barry's flesh, beginning the alien transformation.

Meanwhile the other scientists are looking on, wondering if they want to go onto the spaceship at all.

"That's not looking good!" one scientist says.

"Should we go?" another replies.

All four agree to abandon their lead scientist Barry and head back to Earth, where they tell a news reporter what they witnessed.' ”

Chapter one of *It starts with I Do*

Glasgow Pilot



The Super Power Agency works in some of Scotland’s most disadvantaged communities. The majority of the young people we work with live within SIMD zones 1 and 2. We have worked with 5,000+ young people across these zones in the east of Scotland since 2017. One of our main objectives for the next three years is to expand our reach to Glasgow, where child poverty rates are far above the national average at 32% (Understanding Glasgow: The Glasgow Indicators Project).

In Spring 2024 we ran a successful pilot programme in the Possil Park area of Glasgow, taking our unique writing programme Secret Stories into primary schools. There was a strong appetite from teachers, volunteers and communities and we feel confident we can make a huge difference here.

In the academic year 24/25 our aim, funding dependent, is to work with Springburn Academy and All Saints RC Secondary School and their feeder primary schools. 45% of pupils at Springburn Academy are entitled to free school meals and it falls within one of the 5% most deprived areas in Scotland (SIMD). Over 80% of registered pupils at All Saints RC Secondary School live in some of the most deprived datazones in Scotland.



“

Sam starts swinging from the crossbar and launches himself onto the roof of Hampden. While travelling through the air he does three front flips. When he lands on the roof, he finds a roll and a tattie scone.

”

Steven, Saracen Primary School



“

I liked hearing everyone’s ideas and how creative the story was.

”

Collaborations

The Super Power Agency collaborates with literary and community organisations in Scotland to strengthen our network, increase our reach and offer unique opportunities to our young people. As a team, we are incredibly proud of the collaborations this year.

National Library of Scotland Centenary: Between The Pages

2025 will be the centenary year of the National Library of Scotland. To mark this special birthday, the Super Power Agency was invited to collaborate on a project as part of the Library's year-long programme of celebrations. The Library wanted to spotlight young people's writing and two classes from Tynecastle High School were chosen to take part.

Across 8 weeks, over 40 S1 and S2 pupils worked with writer Aimee Skelton to write their own stories inspired by the past, present and future of the National Library of Scotland. As part of their research, the pupils were invited to the Library to meet the staff and have an exclusive tour of the archives and collections. The pupils were inspired by the beautiful and rare books, posters and other pieces on show, as well as the spooky stories of strange things that have happened deep down in the Library vaults...



Students getting inspired at The National Library of Scotland

The final collection of their stories, titled *Between The Pages: Tales of the National Library of Scotland* will be published in 2025 and displayed as part of the centenary celebrations. It will then have a permanent place in the Library's collection - our writers have been making history!

Edinburgh City of Literature Trust x Super Power Agency

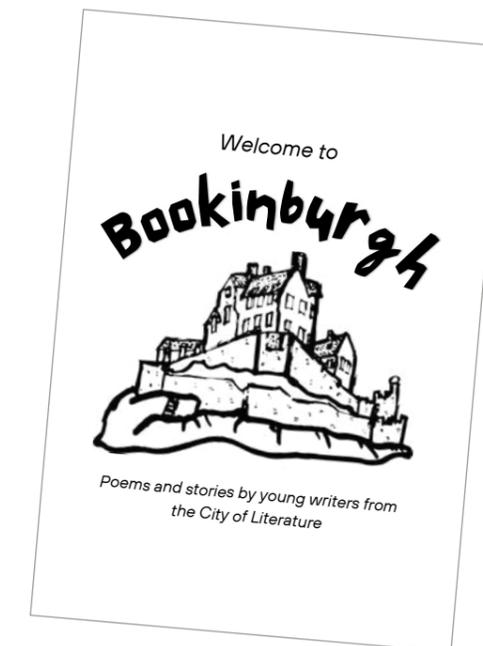
In April 2024, the Edinburgh City of Literature Trust contacted the Super Power Agency with an exciting opportunity to mark the Trust's 20th anniversary. Edinburgh was awarded the title of the very first UNESCO City of Literature back in 2004 and the Super Power Agency is very proud of the part we play in enriching the city's literary heritage.

Twenty-six young people participated in workshops to explore what living in a City of Literature means to them. Led by the Super Power Agency team, they looked at the aims and values of the City of Literature, talked about their favourite words and books, and thought about the unexpected places they'd like to see more reading and writing in the city.

The young people wrote poems, wishlists and personal stories to illustrate why they think reading and writing is important, how literature can bring people together and what a city of literature might look like in the future. These pieces will be published in a pamphlet that will be shared during the City of Literature conference in October 2024. We hope that the writers will also have the opportunity to share their writing in person as part of the conference and other anniversary celebrations.

“The City of Literature is the place to write your wildest ideas down and have them be heard.”

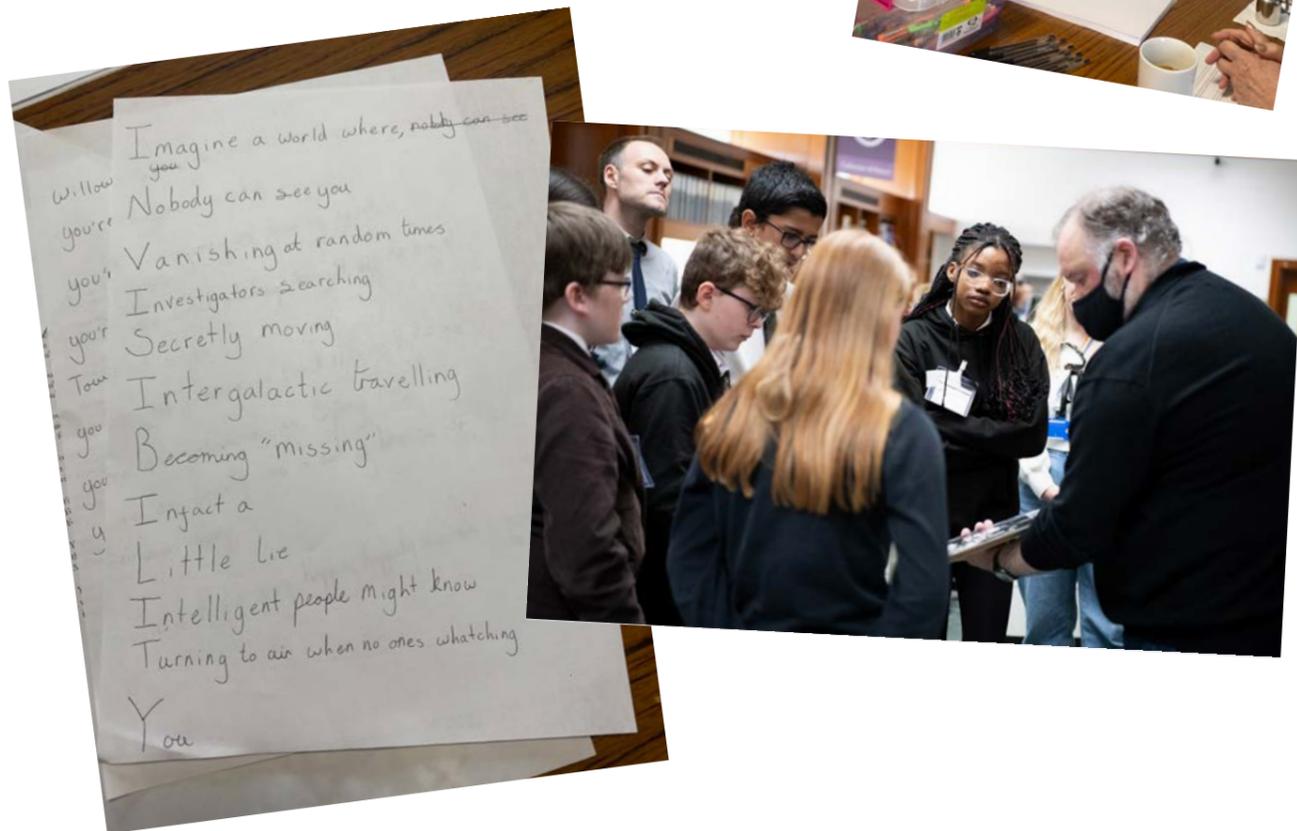
From 'Edinburgh' by Alice from Tynecastle High School



The Ripple Project

The Super Power Agency returned to community hub The Ripple Project in May for a Saturday morning workshop as part of their Intergenerational programme. Poet Colin McGuire took the participants through a series of activities, inviting them to write pieces about themselves and each other. The participant ages in this group ranged from 10 to 82.

The Ripple Project sits in one of the most deprived communities in Scotland and this project is the third we have run with them.



Borders Book Festival

We returned to take part in the Borders Book Festival in June, running our signature Storytelling workshop. One rainy Saturday morning saw 14 young people aged 7-10 year olds take part in this high energy, interactive workshop.



The Return of Evil Dr Slime - an excerpt from the morning workshop



A long, long time ago in a forest in Candyland, where the trees were made of liquorice and the bushes were made of candyfloss, there lived an old man called Jeremy.

One day, slime started falling from the sky like rain, merging together as it hit the ground. The slime began to form into the...Evil Dr Slime. With a bolt of lightning and a boom of thunder, a laser gun blasted out of the clouds, painfully smacking him on the head, knocking him out.

In the distance, Jeremy was spying on Evil Dr Slime. Finally, he found his enemy once again! He was initially confused and frustrated and then ENRAGED! He remembered the last time the slime rain fell...then, Evil Dr Slime went on a rampage, destroying everything in sight.



Summer Programmes

The Super Power Agency helps ALL young people write their story. During the summer holidays, we ran two week-long workshops.

Each project ran for the full day, was run by inspirational writing facilitators and included a healthy lunch. Most importantly, they were all free. We were even able to offer travel bursaries to those who needed them.

Families told us how grateful they were that these resources were available to them. This is why we are passionate about offering free dynamic and fun learning opportunities to those in the local community. One young person has come back three years running!!

Earth Adventures Creative Writing Workshop

Firstly, we hosted a creative writing workshop at Bridgend Farmhouse in Edinburgh. We had 9 young people aged 10 to 14 join us over 5 days. Our time was split between working outside and indoors, making use of Bridgend's outdoor classroom space and the beautiful Craigmillar Woods nearby.

Led by facilitator Linden McMahon, this workshop encouraged young people to connect with the natural world around them to inspire their writing. Through a range of different activities and games, the young people wrote about how to have better relationships with animals and plants, addressing climate change and what they hoped the world might be like in the future.

At the end of the week, their writing was compiled into a final zine entitled Fixing the Future. There was some fantastic writing and they seemed delighted with the finished zine. Many of them enjoyed the multimedia approach. On Friday afternoon, all of the writers took to the stage to read their poems and stories in front of an enthusiastic audience of their parents and families. This was a really proud moment for their families, the Super Power Agency team and, most importantly, the young people themselves.



“It was good getting to hear everyone's ideas and sharing our own ideas.”

“I really enjoyed having time to write.”



Computer Game Story Design

The Computer Game Story Design workshop is one of the most popular free summer workshops among the young people we work with. This year we had 14 participants aged between 9 and 14 years old who joined us.

Led by expert Narrative Designer Gav Inglis, the workshop's aim was to teach young people how to fully develop their own computer game. From concept creation of characters, storylines and world building to software learning and coding.

The group created some incredible plots such as The Vault, a 3-level game set across fictional islands hiding secret vaults, The Conspiracy, a historical game set in a space-based television studio and Songs of the Wild, a group of mythical creatures on a quest to find their home in the Highlands.

At the end of the workshop, all the participants were able to take home their own creation to play and share it with their family and friends.

Our volunteer Annie, who followed this workshop for years, says "It is a joy to see everyone so enthusiastic and open to creating their stories and their games!"

“This year we had the most engaged young people ever, developing the best games. The level of dedication and hard work seen this year shows how much desire there is out there for this kind of programme!”

Gav Inglis

"I like it a lot! I hope you remember me for next year"

"I couldn't sleep last night thinking about my game!"

"I am proud of using descriptive adjectives and phrase in my story"

Volunteers

Note from Maria Bruno, Volunteer Coordinator

One of the more well-known facts about our volunteers is the long-lasting impact they make on the young people we work with. This year we had a surge of volunteer applications for the roles of Writing Mentor and E.L.E.P.H.A.N.T., our editing collective, resulting in 52 new volunteers recruited.

Within our organisation volunteers' roles vary, from classroom-based to fully remote ones. This allows us to include people from all walks of life with different backgrounds, ages and skills.

Volunteering is a two-way street; it can benefit you as much as the cause you choose to help. Dedicating your time as a volunteer helps you make new friends, expand your network, and boost your social skills. Most importantly, even helping out with the smallest tasks can make a real difference to the lives of young people and organisations in need.

We are so grateful for the amazing work our 150 superheroes carry out every day, whether it is directly in the classroom, working closely with the young people, or remotely, editing and illustrating young people's stories.



What our volunteers think

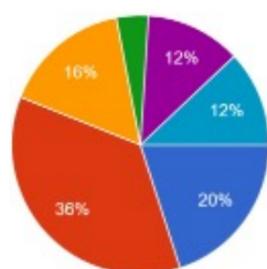
"When kids have the opportunity to write in a free-flow style they can create great material. As a volunteer, I often simply have to highlight a few really great sentences, point out brilliant plot ideas, and ask a few questions to help them on their way to creating lovely and enjoyable stories. The end result is often something the kids can be really proud of"

"The creative interaction with kids and the collaboration with the SPA team to help kids create these amazing stories"

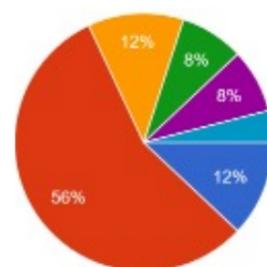
"I love seeing the transformation in young people as each project progresses! It's a magical thing to witness as their confidence and enjoyment steadily grow. And I love being in the classroom - yes, there are sometimes challenges but volunteering with the Super Power Agency has brought me so much laughter, so much fun, and so many new perspectives. I've gained so much from the experience. And I have read some GREAT pieces of writing!"

"I believe that the work we do gives opportunities to young people to be skillful in reading and writing, to be curious about the world, and to feel confident about their own abilities."

Volunteer profile



- Employed, full-time
- Employed, part-time
- Unemployed, looking
- Unemployed, not looking
- Student
- Retired

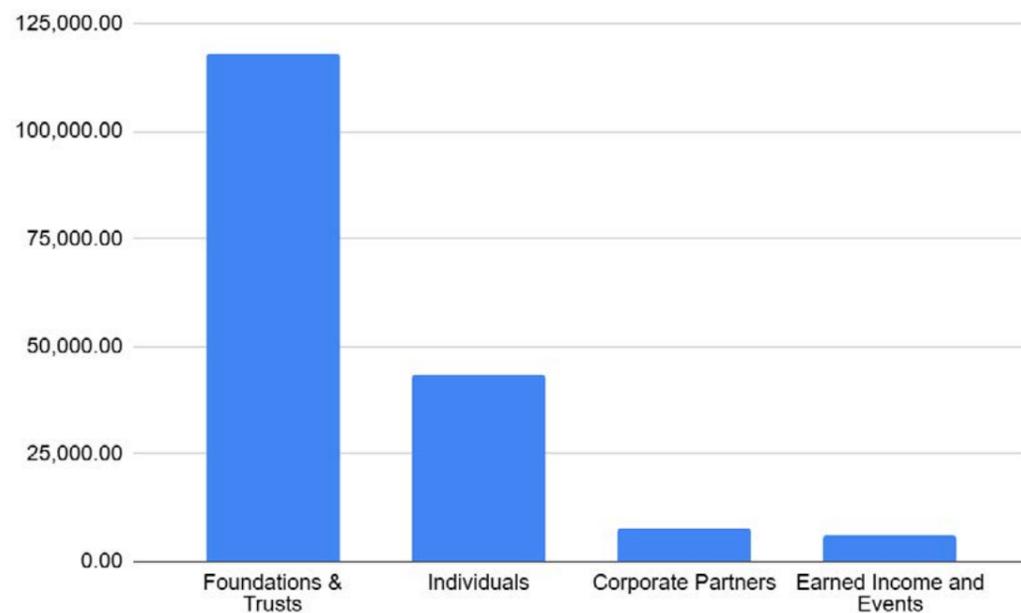


- 18-25
- 26-35
- 36-45
- 46-55
- 56-65
- over 65

Financials



In addition, in this period we received deferred income of £42,424



How You Can Support Us

If you would like to donate to the Super Power Agency it will allow us to work with more young people.

The Super Power Agency operates without any government funding and relies solely on donations to bring our unique learning experiences to the classroom. All of our work is free to schools and young people, from the workshops to the book production. The SPA publishes everything the young people write. We have seen first-hand the confidence and self-esteem that young people experience from having their work published in a book. It becomes a testament to their hard work and dedication.

Write yourself into our story - scan the code below.



Head to our website to read the full Annual Report
superpoweragency.com

Our Supporters

We would like to thank all of our funders for making our work possible this year.



Amazon Literary Partnerships
 Belfour Beatty
 Christina Mary Hendrie Trust
 Cordis Charitable Trust
 Core Cut
 Dianna M Porterfield
 Hawthornden Foundation
 Nancie Massey Charitable Trust
 Nicholas and Diana Baring
 Rhodar
 Ryvoan Trust
 Scape
 Souter Charitable Trust
 The Co-op Community Good Causes
 The Jasmine Foundation
 The John Lewis Community Matters Scheme
 The Mickel Foundation
 The Peter Vardy foundation
 The Robertson Trust
 The Tennant family

And all those who choose to remain anonymous.

You are superheroes!

Our strategic aims 2024-2027

The Super Power Agency is a literacy charity on a mission to help young people write their story. Our programmes empower young people to express themselves in writing, gaining confidence and unleashing creativity with the goal of closing the current attainment gap in Scottish education.

Being literate has both an immediate impact for an individual and a long-term benefit for the wider world. It allows people to explore and communicate what they think, feel and know. The Super Power Agency exists to inspire young people to write. We believe that nobody should be deprived of creative outlets, especially those growing up in under resourced communities. The ability to write their story can right their story.

Following a period of restructure, reflection and analysis, the Super Power Agency has developed a plan that is ambitious, yet pragmatic in serving young people and their communities.

This plan has been approved by the Board of Directors who will review it on an ongoing basis and to ensure the organisational objectives are being met.

The aim throughout this strategy, and all the work we do at the Super Power Agency, is to help young people write their story. To ensure we do this to the best of our ability we have five strategic objectives for the next three years. Throughout this time, the activities and deliverables may change, though our objectives will stay the same.

Our Strategic Pillars

1

Help young people across Scotland write their story

2

Increase reach on a national level

3

Ensure we have the resources to support and grow

4

Make the Super Power Agency a team people want to be part of

5

Collaborate widely to strengthen our network and bring communities together

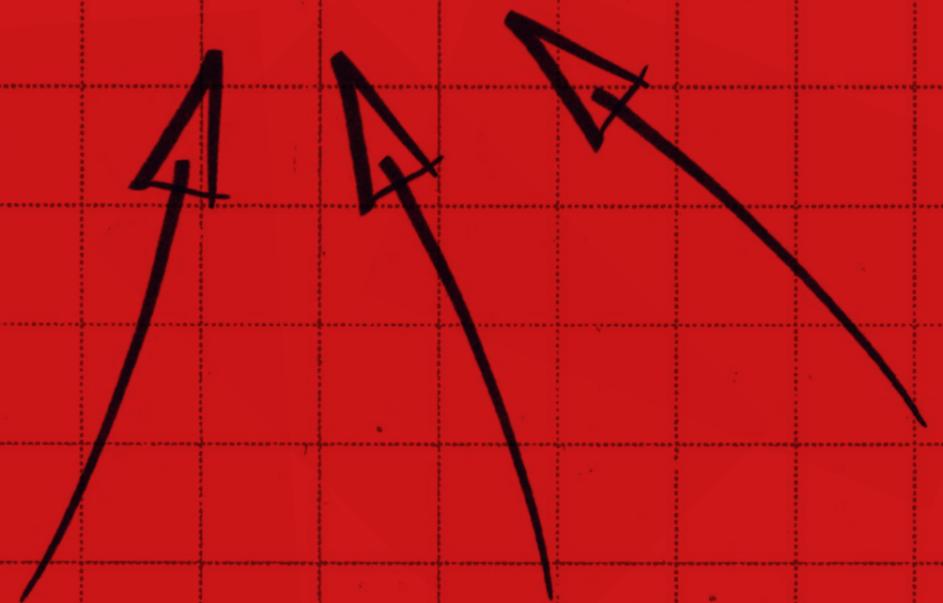


For more information please get in touch with Managing Director,
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