



TALES TO SCALE: SCALING EDUCATION STRATEGY

2023-2025





FIGHTING WORDS

The write to right.

Who We Are

Fighting Words is a creative writing centre established by Roddy Doyle and Sean Love in 2009. Fighting Words helps students of all ages all over Ireland and in Northern Ireland to develop their writing skills and to explore their love of writing.

The aim of Fighting Words is to empower and enable young people to write creatively, and to have fun with imagination and ideas while writing their stories. Creative engagement brings additional benefits for participants in terms of education – literacy, numeracy, and oracy. Children become more confident and resilient, and benefit in terms of wellbeing, mental health, self-efficacy, and improved social, emotional and communications skills.

Fighting Words delivers free creative writing opportunities for primary and post-primary school children covering all genres, through workshops, book projects, writing clubs, and other projects. Hundreds of workshops are delivered annually from the twenty Fighting Words locations around the country. Over 240,000 children have participated in Fighting Words activities since it was founded in 2009.

Our Mission

Our aim is to help children and young people, and adults who did not have this opportunity as children, to discover and harness the power of their own imaginations and creative writing skills. At its core, Fighting Words is also about something much broader and more inclusive. It is about using the creative practice of writing and storytelling to strengthen our children and teenagers – from a wide range of backgrounds – to be resilient, creative and successful shapers of their own lives.

Our Core Values

- Creativity and imaginative. We are dreamers and storytellers.
- Positivity and excitement. We always look on the bright side and treat everyone we work with positivity, unconditionally.
- Audacious and curious. We unlock the power of creativity and engage on difficult issues.
- Participative and collaborative. We are all about people, engagement, partnership, and community.
- Equity and fairness. We want equality, dignity, and the same opportunities for all.
- Supportive and nurturing. We want to listen and give everyone a voice.



Tales to Scale: Scaling Education

The Scaling Education Project works towards scaling and influencing educational disadvantage in Ireland. Fighting Words will focus on delivering creative engagement in DEIS schools through Scaling Education: Tales to Scale with the aim to have creative activities in all DEIS schools in the country within three years.

Fighting Words delivers a transformative approach to address educational disadvantage. It is a simple but effective quest, to provide creative writing and creative learning opportunities for children and young people experiencing disadvantage, discrimination, and exclusion. We know through experience and evidence that creativity is fundamental to the full development of the child, and it enables them to address and respond to the educational challenges and societal barriers they face.

Tales to Scale: Scaling Education Priorities

1. Facilitating creative workshops in DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- Consistently create opportunities for children and young people in DEIS schools to participate in a creative experience through Fighting Words workshops and projects.
- Creative experiences with further learning centres such as Youthreach and iScoil.
- Creative experiences will maintain Fighting Words core values.
- Promoting imagination, skills inherently possessed to write stories, sense of creative freedom, and agency during creative experiences. Reminding children and young people that they can apply creative thinking to everyday lives.
- All creative work produced in workshops and projects will be published in some form and always on the Fighting Words website under Tales to Scale Stories. The whole world can access these stories, and teachers will be sent links to share with parents/guardians, and on school websites and social media.
- Creating a shared sense of community through series of workshops and projects in accordance with the geographical plan.

2. Ensuring creative workshops are accessible to DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- Typically, Fighting Words workshops take place within

one of our regional centres – Dublin being the popular and first centre to open.

- With increasing cost of living and cost of fuel, DEIS schools do not always have the budget to offer classes transport to Fighting Words centres.
- Fighting Words will work with schools and further learning centres to organise suitable alternatives to ensure children and young people receive workshops.

3. Shaping workshop design to adapt to learning needs of children and young people in DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- Fighting Words workshop formats are not only fun and engaging but are shaped to suit the needs of children and young people with focus on using child/young person's language, ideas and imaginations.
- We will monitor our current models and ask if they suit children and young people in DEIS schools specifically.
- We will adapt our models to ensure that all children and young people attending a workshop can feel a sense of inclusion and sense of being heard.

4. Learning and support for teachers in DEIS schools.

- Helping teachers to feel confident to bring creativity into the classroom to further creative experiences.
- Sharing Fighting Words methodologies and approaches.
- Promoting creative expression amongst teachers to further their sense of confidence with creative freedom in the classroom.
- Become part of a shared experience with their class outside educational curriculum.
- Supporting teachers to recognise individuality and individual creativity amongst their children and young

people.

- Aiding teachers with children and young people's creative freedom, particularly beyond barriers that may hinder creativity.

5. Investigating the impact of Fighting Words experiences in DEIS schools.

- Seeking methods to measure qualitative impact with children and young people in DEIS schools.
- How we interpret the information, and what we do with the information.
- Understanding the role of Fighting Words in the education eco-system, and how it is possible to inspire, shape and be part of a wider recognition of creative importance to children and young people.

Tales to Scale: Scaling Education Actions

1. Facilitating creative workshops in DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- DEIS schools and further education centres will be given priority during Fighting Words programme scheduling across the regional centres.
- With twenty Fighting Words centres in Ireland, DEIS schools have become a central focus when organising standard one-off workshops.
- Larger projects coordinated by Fighting Words staff have implemented and carved space to strategically open and adapt structures and formats for DEIS schools.
- Alongside standard school workshops and larger projects coordinated by Fighting Words staff and regional coordinators, Tales to Scale will adventure across Ireland to deliver series of creative workshops and projects specifically for DEIS schools in accordance with the geographical plan.
- The geographical plan is mapped out by county and number of DEIS schools in each county. The aim is to work with cohorts of DEIS schools per county, creating a sense of shared community in published work.
- Fighting Words will move towards allocating 40% of its workshop capacity to education disadvantage in 2024, and 50% of its workshop capacity by 2025.
- Facilitators will highlight programmes offered to children and young people outside of school to increase our engagement with children and young people attending DEIS schools beyond the classrooms. Such programmes include Write Club, Young Playwrights, Word Warriors, sum-

mer camps.

2. Ensuring creative workshops are accessible to DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- Creative workshops will be offered to DEIS schools and further education centres within their closest Fighting Words centre.
- The workshop and/or Project Coordinator will work with the school to ensure if they can travel.
- If in the event a school cannot travel due to distance or expensive bus hire, alternative spaces will be an option.
- Fighting Words has a wonderful history and partnerships with numerous libraries and arts centres who are generally excited to engage with local schools and communities.
- Fighting Words will encourage to bring the class into a different, creative environment as best as possible as a path to creating spaces where children and young people are inherently trusted.
- If in the event, an alternative space is not accessible, a Fighting Words team will visit schools and deliver workshops in the classroom.
- This opens an avenue of research to determine impact of the space in which a Fighting Words workshop is delivered - workshops in Fighting Words centres/local venues in comparison to workshops in the classrooms.
- Fighting Words can offer online workshops to schools who may be far out of reach but would like to participate in a workshop. Although there is less online workshop engagement in recent years, the online models – specifically for primary schools – are still effective when Zooming into the classroom.

3. Shaping workshop design to adapt to learning needs of children and young people in DEIS schools and further learning centres.

- Fighting Words will assess the current workshop models to determine if they are inclusive to children and young people in DEIS schools and further education centres.
- Fighting Words has incorporated many methods and skills into current models, facilitators and volunteer team which allows them to engage with many different children and young people.
- The Fighting Words team and structures have methods in place to reassure children and young people that all workshops are designed for them, and there are many ways to tell stories.
- Fighting Words will check assumptions that are likely to present in a DEIS school context and work with children and young people to best possible hindering barriers.

4. Learning and support for teachers in DEIS schools.

- There is a range of information under School Programmes and Educator Resources, for teachers including details surrounding Fighting Words workshops, the partnership with DCU, and research based on Fighting Words methodologies.
- Fighting Words will seek to host information and training workshops with teachers in DEIS schools around Ireland, connecting with education and training centres.
- Run mock workshops with teachers, placing them in the child or young person's roles.
- Discuss interpretations of creativity, what it means to them, and how they think it can be implemented into the classroom, how they can encourage creative thinking.
- Listen to concerns, challenges, and obstacles to discuss solutions or alternative ways to implement creativity.

- This priority will particularly work closely with Fighting Words Education Director.
- Establish an online project that will invite all teachers in DEIS schools to participate with their class. This will be an opportunity for teachers to apply Fighting Words methodologies and submit a short story/comic/play, etc., that will be collected in an online anthology and published on the Fighting Words website. Teachers will receive resource packs before the project so they can prepare and connect with Fighting Words should they need further preparation.

5. Investigating the impact of Fighting Words experiences in DEIS schools.

- Assess the current Impact Management Framework and work with Rethink Ireland to adapt framework using the Theory of Change model.
- Working closely with a cohort of DEIS schools - two primary schools (rural and urban) and two post-primary schools (rural and urban) across two years to measure impact.
- Listening to young voices and voices of teachers by collecting written feedback from children and young people before workshops end.

Tales to Scale: Scaling Education Geographical Plan

The geographical plan below is a provisional guide to mapping the adventures Tales to Scale will partake. Between standard workshops in Fighting Words centres that consistently deliver to schools, other series of workshops and/or project will be implemented to each cohort to extend the reach of DEIS schools.

Year 1 – 2023

- Limerick, Clare and Tipperary
- Waterford
- Louth, Monaghan and Donegal
- Offaly
- Cork
- Connemara and Donegal

Year 2 – 2024

- West Dublin
- Kildare, Laois, Meath
- Kerry and Cork
- Kilkenny and Carlow
- Westmeath and Longford
- Limerick, Clare and Tipperary
- Waterford

Year 3 – 2025

- Galway and Mayo
- Cavan and Leitrim
- Roscommon and Sligo
- Wicklow and Wexford
- Donegal
- Limerick, Clare and Tipperary

