

COUNTRY DIARY

First Story really is changing lives through writing

First Story brings writers to schools in poorer areas. On 26 September, at Lincoln Drill Hall and as part of the Lincoln Book Festival, the work of First Story will be launched in the city by the distinguished author Nicola Morgan, together with a young writer who took part in the programme at Cherry Willingham School near Lincoln, who says: "Taking part in the First Story programme was genuinely one of the best things I had ever done. First Story has helped me gain so much confidence and I would recommend it to absolutely anyone and everyone."

At the same event, the Lincoln Castle Academy school will launch its first anthology, inspired by First Story.

First Story has residencies in about 200 schools, and the three in Lincolnshire are sure to grow. From its foundation in 2007, First Story has transformed the lives of disadvantaged children. A lad at Banovallum School in Horncastle had autism and struggled to make friends and show emotions. The First Story team helped him to gain a short residency course, where he learned about his emotions through short stories. He has now made friends and grown so much in confidence. His mother says the course changed her son's life, and he says it was "the best experience ever".

There is much to do: residencies and competitions, festivals and workshops, talks and very positive profile-building. The Lincoln event will join the ever-growing support for First Story, with its motto: "Changing lives through writing."

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