



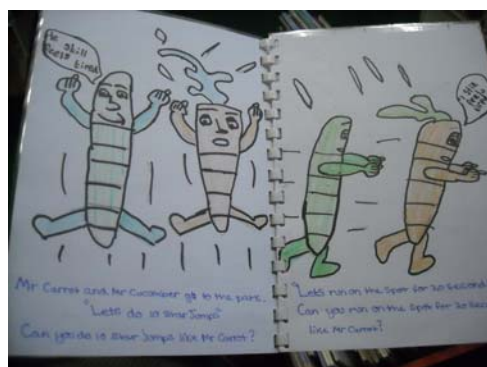
Early Reading Connects

Pupils learn the art of storytelling

It must be the way they tell them; pupils at Ledbury Primary School have been putting their newly acquired storytelling skills into practice, much to the delight of the toddlers at Herefordshire Council’s Children’s Centre. Kim Gristy, from the Council explains how it’s all happened.

Building on the success of a similar project run last year, we had 83 year six pupils participating this time around. The aim was to get pupils excited about writing stories, illustrate them, and then share their excitement with families at the local children’s centre and local nursery.

In preparation for this project, the pupils had several guest speakers visit them at school. Neil Griffiths, former Headteacher and creator of the internationally acclaimed story sack concept, visited the school to inspire the pupils about the magic of storytelling. These sessions were lots of fun and there was much laughter.



Cartoon time



Learning to tell a story

Simon Cooke, Ledbury’s local cartoonist, did an exciting drawing session with the pupils to spark imaginations and help them develop characters for their stories. Speaking after the sessions, Simon commented, “Working with the children was great fun, they were inspirational”.

Bridget Hawkins from the children’s centre also ran a session about the types of stories children like and why. This was an interactive session full of laughter. Bridget is an imaginative storyteller who encouraged the pupils to experiment with the importance of voice, body language, props and

visuals when storytelling. Bridget asked the children if she could read them a story and if they would help her act it out. There was

some resistance at the start, but with encouragement the pupils became very enthusiastic. This helped them understand what young children would gain from the story. The room became animated with everyone sharing what they had learnt and how it had made them feel. The pupils said how much they were looking forward to starting their own stories and were asking the teacher when they could start.

The sessions the children joined were the weekly storytelling group at the Children's Centre. Each group consisted of about six to 10 children with their parent or carer. The year six pupils sat down on the mat with the children and the youngest children huddled around closer to the storyteller so they could look at the illustrations in the books as the story was being told. The pupils were creative in the ways they engaged and involved families in their stories. Some of the stories involved actions. The pupils got everyone springing to their feet to join in the actions and then back on the mat to focus on the story again.

The pupils' confidence and passion for their books was infectious, and after the storytelling the children were keen to look over the books in their free time. One parent summed up the good work of the year six pupils: "Confident reading, interesting stories, enjoyed the actions, they kept the younger children entertained and the drawings were very good". Another parent said, "I loved the different textures they used in the books, thank you for sharing your lovely books with us". One pupil remarked, "I was shocked the children joined in with all the exercises." Another told us, "I loved writing and making the story book, but the best bit was telling the story to the children."

This project has been magical. The energy and enthusiasm from the year six pupils has been enormous. The children's centre works very closely with Ledbury Primary School throughout the year and organises lots of joint activities. This is a great example of how working in partnership can pull together learning, enjoyment of books and stories, fun and laughter for school children and children's centre families.