

The Festival of Stories

Our first Learning Adventure of the new academic year focussed upon the wonders of storytelling and story making. As part of the project, we worked with the storyteller, Graham Rogers, who led a range of sessions with children across the school – Graham’s expertise helped us to bring a range of stories to life in a fun and interactive way. The children and the teachers used Graham’s sessions as the starting point for a rich variety of learning experiences within the classrooms – as well as a wealth of links to the English curriculum, children were able to explore a diverse range of curriculum areas, from Art and Design to scientific investigation. As the Learning Adventure progressed, it was wonderful to see the enthusiasm that children demonstrated for the stories they were engaging with – it was also wonderful to see the superb turnout that we had for the parent and children storytelling session with Graham – thank you to all those who attended. Here’s a look at some of the learning experiences that took place during the Learning Adventure ...



Above: Graham Rogers leads a storytelling session with a class of children.

Beginnings of a Story Adventure

The Learning Adventure began with a special storytelling event for each year group, led by Graham Rogers. Graham is a highly experienced storyteller, who has thrilled young audiences with his storytelling sessions in a range of venues, including as part of this year’s Dorset Storytelling Festival. The following stories were shared with the year groups:

Foundation and Year 1: The Three Little Pigs

Year 2: Jack and the Pirates

Year 3: The Snow Queen

Year 4: King Kong

Graham’s storytelling sessions encouraged the children to participate in a range of ways i.e. through the use of drama, props, puppets, song and discussion – as a result, the children were captivated and enthralled every step of the way. This approach to storytelling demonstrates how sharing a story can be much more than a simple reading from a book and that a range of strategies can be utilised to enable the story to literally ‘leap from the pages and into the heart and mind of the child’.

LEARNING ADVENTURE NEWS

Curriculum Opportunities

In response to the initial storytelling sessions, the children and their teachers set about exploring the stories in a range of ways – one of the advantages of using a story as a starting point for learning is the rich variety of curriculum links that can often be made. As the Learning Adventure progressed, the children went on to explore a range of other stories, which were also rich in potential learning experiences. Here are a selection of some of the curriculum activities that took place:

Foundation

Children in Foundation moved on to explore the story of Percy the Park Keeper, which provided a number of learning activities: children designed and made their own parks after thinking carefully about the different features they would need to incorporate; they also had to solve the problem of the escaped ducks, which required a great deal of thought and creative thinking!

Year 1

Children in Year 1 went on to explore a number of other traditional stories, such as the Gingerbread Man and The Three Billy Goats Gruff. The Gingerbread Man led to a cooking session, in which children created their very own gingerbread biscuits. When exploring The Three Billy Goats Gruff, the children created stick puppets of the main characters and then staged a performance of the story.

Year 2

Children in Year 2 explored the story of The Lighthouse Keepers Lunch, which led to the discovery of a beached whale – this required the children to become whale experts, so that they could stage a dramatic rescue. As part of their role as whale experts, the children imagined they were part of their very own 'Sea Life Centre' and thought carefully about what the centre would be like and how it would be run.

Year 3

In Year 3, the children investigated a mystery in the school woodlands, in which the Big Bad Wolf had been the victim of a terrible crime. The children carried out a thorough investigation of all possible suspects (characters from a range of traditional tales), so that the villain of the piece could be found!

Year 4

In response to their King Kong storytelling session, the Year 4 children wrote their own versions of the King Kong story, this time with an alternative ending – this enabled children to think creatively and critically about the original story. The Year 4 children were also set the very important task of writing an Elmer story for Year 1 – this required them to write for a target audience and provided a lovely opportunity for them to publish and share their finished stories with the younger children.

Story Making

Mid-way through the Learning Adventure, Graham Rogers returned to the school to work with the children once again – this time with a focus upon story making. Graham worked with each class of children, building a story in response to the children's ideas, for instance, the children in Year 3 suggested making a story about a polar bear that finds itself in the strange surroundings of a rainforest. These workshops really encouraged the children to develop their imaginations and prompted some highly creative story writing back in the classrooms.

At the end of the Learning Adventure, we staged a special whole school storytelling event. All children worked in mixed age groups for a highly enjoyable afternoon, during which they completed a range of creative activities in response to a shared story. The children demonstrated super teamwork skills during the afternoon - it was lovely to see the confidence with which the youngest children interacted with their older peers and it was equally heart-warming to see the supportive and caring attitudes demonstrated by the older children. It was an event that really celebrated the wonderful learning of all of the children during our 'Festival of Stories' Learning Adventure!