

Pageturners Hilarious Books Experience, November 9th – December 7th 2012, The Hub, Calne

What we did

Pageturners ran an 5 week project for children aged 8 – 11 from schools in the Calne Community Area. This project was funded by Calne Community Area Partnership. Eleven children took part and there was a good mix from across the age range. There were four boys and seven girls.

At the first session the group heard extracts and blurbs from a range of funny books. They scored these out of ten. They heard about a funny character from each book and chose which one they would most like to create – the gangster granny was a popular choice! They finally got to see the book covers and give those a mark out of ten too. The winning book was Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Flies Again by Frank Cottrell Boyce. This book was then the focus of the following 4 sessions. Each week, aspects of the book were drawn out and brought to life using interactive methods. Some of the activities included:

- Creating a favourite character from the story as puppet – with a range of materials.
- There was some short bursts of reading aloud (while the group doodled in one week and made the characters the other time) to get people into the book.
- They read out scripted scenes from the book in the second session to introduce the story and get people involved – everyone had a drama prop for their character. This worked really well.
- Recreating a scene from the book as a short drama script. The group had to imagine what would happen if the family in the story got stuck on the top of the Eiffel Tower (they actually did, later on in the book) and write a short scene, incorporating what they knew about each family members characteristics. They performed each others scenes together the following week – with drama props.
- Using drama props, they had to invent their own unusual hero – all of the books we were choosing from had unusual heroes (a car engine, a granny and an alien schoolboy!).
- A Chitty Chitty Bang Bang Challenge game; using a dice everyone had to answer fun questions or complete team challenges connected to the book to earn prizes.
- Everyone completed 'book profiles' – these resulted in personalised recommended further hilarious reading suggestions and some fun discussions about books and films that people enjoyed while they were answering the questions.
- The project ended with a showcase event in the library where parents and family attended. The group got to perform their drama scenes, show they things they had made and give their views on the book. Certificates were handed out along with the reading lists. The library had prepared a 'further reading' display based on the reading lists so people could get books out straight away.

Feedback from participants

Feedback was collected at a few different points throughout the project – to get thoughts about the activities and the book. More detailed feedback was collected at the very end.

At the end of session two group were asked to write down a score out of ten for the session, something you enjoyed and something you would change/improve.

10/10 : enjoyed everything

10/10 I wouldn't change anything

10/10 the scene writing (favourite)

9/10

8/10 The scenes and writing scenes (fave)

9.5/10

10/10 Acting was favourite bit – would change nothing.

10/10

10/10 When we wrote a script (fave)

10/10 would change nothing

Session three:

Thoughts about the book so far (mark out of ten and a word or two to describe)

9/10: Exciting, funny, clever

10/10: Excellent

9/10: Great

10/10

7/10: Unusual, peculiar, different

9/10

10/10: Funny

10/10: Brilliant when I was Lucy. [We read some of the book as a script on week 2]

Thoughts about the session

(On one post-it write something you enjoyed on another write something you didn't enjoy or something you would change/improve).

Things they enjoyed

Acting

I liked EVERYTHING

I like all the drama

I liked doing all the drama and games

I like the bits when you acted out mum

7/10 It's a bit unusual. Lots more food!

I enjoyed playing the game and acting

Doing the drama in front of everyone (and the chocolate)

Things they didn't like/would improve

Script-writing [in week one – though he did say he liked acting out his own script, just not the actual writing of it].

I didn't like.. NOTHING

There could have been more drama

I would have liked more time on the games

Nothing

Nothing at all yo!

Nothing.

Feedback at final session

Marks out of ten for the book: 8, 10, 10, 10, 10, 10,10,

Comments on book:

- It's really funny
- It was really funny and adventurous
- It was funny, adventurous and a clever book
- It's adventurous
- Lots of adventure
- It's a good book

Something you enjoyed about the project and why:

- Drama, because it's my favourite thing
- When I got to be Lucy and we acted

- Making all the craft because I love art and drama
- Everything, because we played games and we lots of creative activities
- Making the characters
- Drama because it was fun
- How we got to do drama and art because I like art and acting!

How would you describe this project to other children?

- GREAT FUN! FABULOUS!
- It is really good
- Fun and exciting
- IT IS AMAZING!!
- Epic and awesome and cool
- Fun
- I don't know!

The children also gave informal feedback throughout too, they were all sorry that it was ending and wished it could go on longer!

Feedback from parents

I received some informal feedback from parents at the end of sessions, via text messages and at the final session. At the end session, all of the parents gave positive feedback saying their children had really enjoyed it. All parents were given an short evaluation sheet to fill in and a few did this too.

Informal feedback:

- “He loves coming every week, it’s great to see as he doesn’t normally read much.”
- “She has loved going on a Friday and has told me if there are any more sessions she wants to go!”
- “It’s been brilliant. She has really loved coming and it’s great to see her being enthusiastic about books. She’s just selected two [from the library] to take home, which is so encouraging to see.”
- “Whatever you’ve been doing, it’s worked! He’s loved coming.”
- “Thank you for running the project, it’s been lovely.”

From the evaluation form (3 completed)

What did your child enjoy the most?

Sharing a book with other children x 1

Creative activities x 1

Drama x 1

Writing

Arts and making things

Games x 1

All of it x 2

Have you noticed any changes in your child's reading since they started Pageturners?

Yes x1 No Maybe x 2

If you answered yes/maybe please give an example:

- She is far more willing to give an unknown book a go rather than sticking to her favourite of writers.
- He has always enjoyed reading but finding the right author sometimes proves problematic - the book chosen X obviously liked as he read it the same night it was given!

Please tick any of the following that apply to your child since taking part in the Pageturners project:

- Increased enthusiasm for reading x 2
- Discussing the book with you/other family members x 3
- Talking at home about the activities and things we've done x 3
- Other (please say what)

Further comments /feedback

X has really enjoyed Pageturners and has re-gained her enthusiasm to read again. She is enjoying a bigger variety of books than before.

Many thanks for all your hard work. My daughter had a fantastic time.

A really nice idea - also nice to meet children from other schools. Ben looked forward to each session and the timings were just right