

Case Study: Christmas Crackers Workshops Norman Gate School, Andover

Who was the project for?

The Christmas Crackers workshops were for two small groups of year 4 boys and girls who attend this special primary school in Hampshire, for pupils with a range of learning disabilities.

What did we do?

The school chose to run a one-off “Christmas Crackers” themed workshop for two groups. Each group of five took part in a hour long session.

The Christmas Cracker workshops are all about exploring christmas, thinking about how we celebrate and how other people might celebrate and having fun with some lively christmas based stories.

The workshops themselves were cracker themed and contained an element of celebration, a joke and games – just like any good cracker! The group were given an empty cracker to fill as we completed each stage of the workshop and they also got to decorate their crackers to take home at the end.

We started by hearing a story of Christmas celebration called ‘The Smelly Sprout’. They also heard a funny story called ‘Aliens Love Panta Claus’. The children dressed up to create their own silly Christmas Characters, talked about the Smelly Sprout and the journey that he had before he found someone to like him, designed pants to decorate the Christmas tree (the aliens decorated christmas trees with pants in the story!), played a dice game with book related ‘forfeits’ and cracker prizes.

What were the challenges?

The group were enthusiastic about the workshop from the start and as the workshops were run during school time this helped their enthusiasm as it was seen as something different. The low literacy levels could have been a challenge, but it was easily worked around with appropriate stories and activities. These two stories were just right for both groups. They were very engaged and listened intently to each story and took part very willingly in all the activities.

What were the outcomes/feedback?

The group were engaged in a literacy based project and really enjoyed it. One of the teaching assistants said they were all talking about the stories during snack time afterwards.

At the end, they voted for their favourite story by placing a christmas decoration of their chosen book on the tree – Aliens Love Panta Claus came out top overall. But The Smelly Sprout received a good number of votes too!

They also placed a christmas decoration to show their enjoyment of the workshop (high on the tree meant you had enjoyed it a lot and low on the tree meant you hadn't really enjoyed it). All but one of the 10 children put their decorations at the very top – one was placed just a little lower down.

The school reported that they were very pleased with the workshops and the class teacher was impressed with how well they had gone.