

Hardenhuish Hilarious Books Experience, January 2013

What we did

Hardenhuish Secondary School in Chippenham received funding from the Wiltshire Council PAWs scheme to run an Hilarious Books Experience. This was for a group of year seven boys who needed encouragement to do more reading for pleasure. The project ran for four sessions of two hours long. The final session included a showcase for parents to attend, find out what they had been doing and watch some drama based around the book.

A group of ten boys took part in the project. At the first session they chose a book from a selection of funny fiction aimed at their age and abilities; the winner (by a long way) was *Gangsta Granny* by David Walliams. The group were very enthusiastic about this book from the start. The sessions that followed involved drama, art-based activities and games all centred around the book. The group especially enjoyed re-enacting scenes from *Gangsta Granny* and making a 'granny gadget' of their own...some amazing creations were made during that session!

What were the challenges

Two hours for an after school project based around a book was always going to be a challenge for a group of very lively year seven boys who were not naturally keen readers. In hindsight, shorter sessions over a longer period of time would have been better. Despite being incredibly lively, the group were also enthusiastic and took part in all the activities with great energy. They achieved what they set out to and produced a great showcase for their parents at the end too.

The outcome

All of the group received a copy of the book and most were reading it (and enjoying it) in between sessions. We worked through much of the story in the sessions themselves using drama and games to draw out the story line. Dramatising sections of a book is a brilliant way to engage reluctant readers and has worked well in many Pageturners projects.

The group produced a great showcase for their parents who also gave very positive feedback about the project. The boys all said they had enjoyed it, and much more than they expected to. As one boy said "I didn't want to come, but my mum said I had to. I didn't expect to enjoy it but it's actually quite fun after all."