



Leyton Stories is a literacy initiative funded by EduAction

The Epicentre, Leytonstone, E11 4LJ

27th March 2008

## Event Report

### Overview:

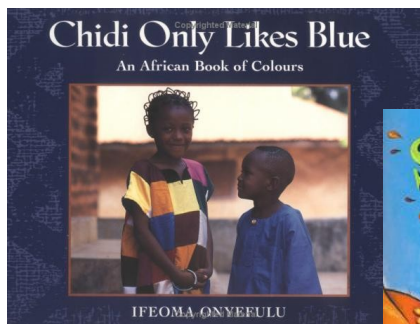
Generously funded by *EduAction* as part of the *Parents as Partners in Early Learning* programme in the London Borough of Waltham Forest, the project intent is to deliver a suite of events for children that introduce authors, illustrators and storytellers to children in the borough.

The project aim is to...

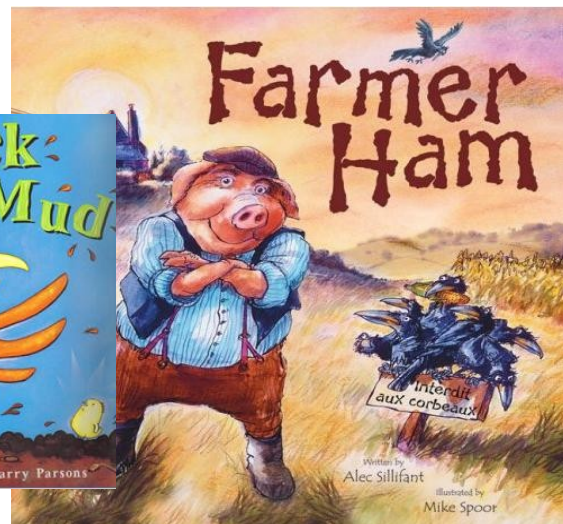
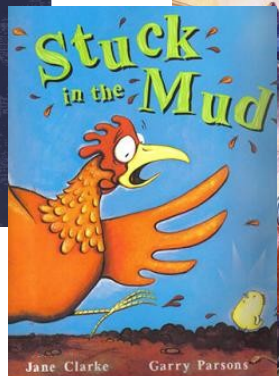
- Bring children's books alive, inspiring creativity and engendering a love of reading.
- Engaging with children and parents in communities in the delivery of good quality children's literature.
- Creating enthusiasm and inspiration
- Developing skills of the imagination in broadening horizons.

On the day the children were able to work with and be engaged by a team of authors, illustrators and storytellers...

Ifeoma Onyefulu, Jane Clarke, Mike Spoor, Clare Beaton and Amaofi Kwapong.



A small example of the Leyton Stories authors and illustrators work.



The day had a loose 'African' theme and the workshops delivered in concert with the children featured stories, making and games from a variety of cultures – all designed to stimulate the imagination and create a love of the written word.

Each child attending received a *Leyton Stories Book Bag*, enabling children to take away from the event at least two free books to stimulate their interest in books and reading in general.

Leyton Stories sent the children home with some £2,000 of free books on the day.

Parents, carers and teachers also receive details of how to start a children's book group in their community, along with a promise from the Leyton Stories project to support their efforts to establish such groups in concert with the FCBG, a national charitable organisation with a children's book mission.

A follow up round of marketing and a meeting will be held in April 2008 to capitalise on the energy generated by the project event at The Epicentre.

The event was supported by the publishers *Frances Lincoln* and *Barefoot Books*, with *Dolphin Booksellers* providing book displays at the event – with thanks to the companies involved for their support and encouragement on the day.

All this was achieved.

#### **Event attendance:**

89 children attended the Epicentre event on the 27<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

They were accompanied by some 27 adults.

Of whom 11 were parents, 6 were childcare professionals and 10 were teachers.



*Ifeoma Onyefulu, author & photographer captures the attention at Leyton Stories*

Languages spoken on the day included English, Russian, Tamil, Urdu, Arabic and Somali.

Borough Cllr. C. Robbins (Children and Young People's Forum) was able to attend the event, with the opportunity to meet children, authors and project staff, kindly agreeing to be photographed with the project team. (*With thanks to Cllr. Robbins from the project team*).

The children attending were drawn from 3 local schools/settings in the area. (*Mayville, Acacia, and Newport*). Lunch was available for all adult attendees, with refreshments/drinks available for everyone throughout the event.

## Early feed-back:

### Children's voices at the event...

**'...my mummy doesn't buy books – we have to buy other things'. Girl, aged 6**

*"...I have 2 new books and they are in my bag"* as he patted the bag enthusiastically, which was firmly wrapped across his shoulders. Boy, aged 6

*"...That was really good, and I have had a chocolate cake."* Boy, aged 5

*"Do you know what we did? Well, we have been making stories with a drum."*

*'Were they good stories?'*

*"Yes, they were" and said in a whisper "And they are secrets, so I can't tell you".* Girl, age 6.

*(Shows a real involvement and that she has taken the story and the activity into her world. I would love to be with her when she acts out the story again in her playing, then we can know how much she has enjoyed it. But for now the secret will remain with her ...and quite rightly so!)*



*Amoafi Kwapong tells a story to some children at Leyton Stories.*

### An author responds...

*'...a very positive experience, the event had a great atmosphere and it was a pleasure to be in such a creative environment. I'd love to meet up again and participate in another Leyton Stories event...'*

### From the teachers...

*"...that was such a good day, the children have taken a huge amount from it. They would have loved to have been at all the workshops!"*

*"...so pleased to see such good books. I haven't seen many of these and they are certainly ones that will be good to have at school. Our children come from so many backgrounds, they love all the colour and the stories."*

*"Great to see books which are not just stories and so much that we can work from."*

*"It was such fun, thank you, when is the next one." ...teachers enjoyed it too!*

## **Project Team response...**

*'Overall this was a very successful event.*

*There were some parts of our original planning that were imperfect, which whilst the delivery of the event was very good, we could have improved the experience for event users.*

*That said, the absolute smiles of delight at the story telling and activity that took place from the children and their absolutely evident delight at taking home their book bags was fantastic'.*

## **Learning from the event:**

1. More display and visual pointers for children at the appropriate level.
2. To have book group information more readily on display.
3. Do not mix noisy activities with quiet – that reflective artists and adventurous makers do not share the same activity space – no matter how large it is.

## **Follow up activity...**

- Press release
- Delivery of a Book group meeting
- Next Event in LBWF
- Thanks to all
- Development of *City Stories* project



*Writer Jane Clarke gets to grips with the detail at Leyton Stories.*



Finally a thank you to Maureen Tucker and her team at The Epicentre, for providing a venue that was warm and welcoming, as well as safe, comfortable and familiar to the children and families attending the event.

With thanks also to our front of house team for making everyone welcome and ensuring that traffic between workshops was handled so well. Thank you Rebecca, Jill, Jacqui and Sarah.