

Leyton Stories

Book Event

**Newport Primary School,
Leyton, London, E10 6PJ
12th February 2009**

SmithMartin Partnership LLP





A Celebration of Children's Books

Newport Primary School 12th February 2009



Event Report

Overview:

A new concept in sharing the joy of reading - keeping literacy at the top of the children's agenda, about bringing authors into school to work closely with children.

Helping to create a children's book group for children and for families to share good books together. The event is in addition to the school curriculum and will give added value to the literacy programme.

It will also give a breath of fresh air to the enjoyment of reading a book. All year 6 children will receive a bag with at least 2 books, and a writers' pack to set them on the way to writing their own stories

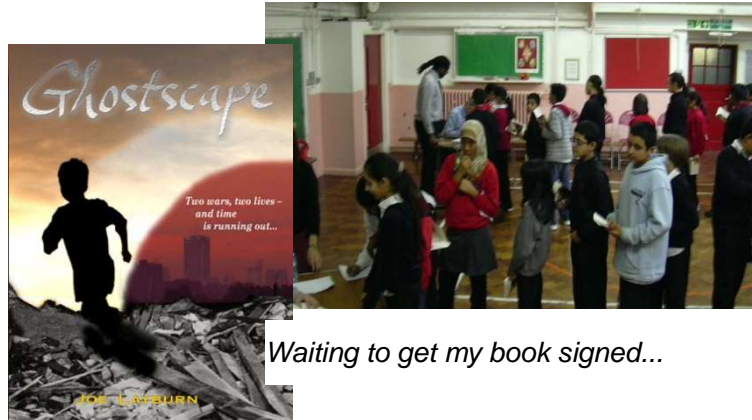
Aims:

- 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.

Objectives:

- To inspire children about books and reading
- To introduce children to authors
- To provide books to children and their families.

At Newport Primary School all the year 6 students, teachers and staff took part in the day. As they came into the hall to meet with the authors, clutching their books, they were excited and buzzing with ideas and expectations. It was going to be great day.



Waiting to get my book signed...

Authors and books

The authors were Joe Layburn, Michaela Morgan and Jonny Zucker; they were a great team, very prepared to answer the most searching of questions. Some of their books are



Our Books

The authors not only write really good books but are excellent at working with children. The books are seen as a trigger for inspiring creative work and to bring conversations alive. They did not necessarily relate directly to the chronological age, as this can often be arbitrary.

Joe Layburn, author of Ghostscape

In 2002, Joe switched careers and as well as writing for children he is now teaching in the East End. Before that he worked for fifteen years as a journalist and TV reporter with the BBC, focussing on programmes for children.

Jonny Zucker, author of Dan and the Mudman

Jonny has written over 30 books for adults, teenagers and children. He has also worked in radio, played in bands and been a stand up comedian.

Michaela Morgan, author of Respect and Night Flight

With over a hundred books written for children, Michaela is an award winning, international author and had books included in the recommended reads for World Book Day 2007.

On the day.....

To set the scene, the day started with searching questions from the students. They showed conclusively that, not only had they read the books but they were inspired to find out more, sometimes about the setting where the stories took place, which in this case was East London, but also some of the feelings that were created and the consequences of actions.



Joe Layburn signs his books for students...

Often the questions related to the authors reasons for writing books. *It became clear that reading the books and meeting with the authors had inspired some of the children, especially the boys to think about writing books themselves.*

Before lunch the students were able to have their books individually signed. Great lines of patiently waiting children filled the hall and there was no rush to leave, even for lunch.

The students also received a bright red bag with books and a writers pack plus bookmarks and information.

Lunch was two huge dishes of noodles and a rice dish, supplied locally – using project funds to support community enterprise.



After lunch the real sessions started, the children worked with the authors in groups of 12. They had some great times, produced some inspiring work and their clear thinking and enjoyment of the books was outstanding.

In additional workshops they wrote their own book reviews, completed electronically. These will be added to the school web site and sent to the authors; they were brilliant and showed the ability of the children to produce written work collaboratively in a short space of time.

At the end of the day the students joined together in the hall with the authors and talked through some further aspects of the books they were especially interested in. More signing at the end of the day and then finally home, but for many they wanted to stay and read another book.

Event details and facts:

- Held at Newport Primary School on 12th February 2009
- 68 students, aged 10 – 11 years attended, joined by 5 teaching staff and other senior staff at the school.
- A number of parents joined the plenary session.
- Students spoke a number of languages in addition to English including Portuguese, Russian, Lithuanian and Somali.
- Over 200 books were given to the students.
- Discussion and written work had been completed by the students in class before the event.
- Questions and answers had shown understanding, raised aspirations and a development of imagination and inspiration.
- Book reviews completed by all students



Book bags, book marks and free books on the day!

Success criteria:

It is hard to sum up the success of an inspiring day as a quantitative measure. It would be difficult to do justice to an event in which all the students were so enthusiastic about the day, from having a bag of books for themselves, to meeting with authors.

If we could measure the success by the smile on the children's faces and the buzz and chatter as they waited to have their books signed then the event was a huge success.

Specific aims were met by:

- Bring children's books alive, inspiring creativity and engendering a love of reading.

Each student received at least 2 books and met with the author of that book. All students demonstrated a love of reading that book and many were inspired to be more creative.

- Engaging with children and parents in communities in the delivery of good quality children's literature.

Direct involvement with the children and the teachers beforehand and delivery of books to the children and the school.

- Creating enthusiasm and inspiration

All students were very enthusiastic throughout the event and showed that they were inspired to read more and start writing their own stories.

- Developing skills of the imagination in broadening horizons.

The students came from a very diverse community and the books helped to both broaden their horizons but also to allow them to find a way to tell their own story of a community they had left behind.



Would the lines of students and the enthusiasm ever end?

More to do....

As always in working with young people there are so many facets that they bring to the event, ideas and added dimensions which it will be great to follow through.

These include:-

- Use of the school web site in collating the book reviews and publishing to the web
- Sending book reviews to the authors for future use(as agreed with the school and students)
- Translating the reviews into the students own languages, through the web site and displaying these in school.
- Collating lists of students questions
- Collating lists of favourite books, of authors and students for inclusion in school literacy information.

We will continue to work with the school, students and teachers beyond the scope of the event itself to enable these to happen.

Early feed-back:

Student's voices at the event...

"I would like to write a book and tell my story..."
...girl aged 10 years

"My Mum is going to want this bag; I'll have to hide it away!" Manuel aged 11 years

"Can I read it in Lithuanian or I can do Russian as well? ", girl aged 11 years after her friend had read a passage from the school web site in Portuguese.

"...That book is fantastic, Aisha is just like me"
...girl aged 10 years, talking to her friend.

"I would like to write a book about football, because I have a lot of skills..." boy aged 10 years

"...I want to have time to finish this so I can get it on the web site." Boy, aged 11 years on writing his book review.

"I love his books and I love this one too."
...boy aged 10 years



Jonny Zucker talks to readers

Authors respond...

'...What a great day it was! I have done millions of school visits but I felt this one was particularly valuable. As the children had received the books before the arrival of the authors they were already fired up and ready to go.

'A fantastic day! The children and the teachers are brilliant. Would be great to do another one?'

'It's great to be involved in this project. The children have really enjoyed it and me too!'

Teachers respond:

"...an excellent day, so good to see the children so enthusiastic. And we have enjoyed it too. Really good to have time to concentrate on a book and talk with the children.'

"...the authors were brilliant with the kids. They were relaxed and it made it very easy for the children to respond so well. When can we do it again?'

Project Team response...

'Really pleased with the day, fantastic to work with year 6 and feel their sense of empathy with the characters in the books. At this age they are very ready for meeting with professional writers and finding ways they can write their own stories and read even more and more.'

'Would like to make more contact with parents and families at another event, either through more forward information being sent out or by offering something that they can have directly.'

'Will continue to work with the school and the Federation of Children's Book Groups to establish a Children's Book Group in East London. It would be the first in the area, but will need support to maintain.

'Would like to do another event at the school in the summer, to enhance the literacy curriculum and community cohesion.'

Follow up activity...

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

Finally a big thank you to Newport Primary School, the students, who made the day special, the teaching staff for contributing in such a positive way, the administration team for all their help on the day and beforehand and especially to Anne Knight, Headteacher, for being inspirational in seeing the vision and in working with us to deliver the event.

It was a great day!

SmithMartin Partnership LLP

Joe Layburn, Michaela Morgan, Jonny Zucker

Nicky Potter at Frances Lincoln Publishers



Only a few book bags left by lunch time!

Contact information and web links

There have been a number of organisations who have contributed to the success of Leyton Stories.

The web sites below will give you further information and some useful links on the development of the City Stories project.

Leyton Stories - Newport Primary School and Children Centre -
For more information contact Anne Knight, head teacher at Newport Primary School

020 839 4552 Newport Primary School, Newport Rd, Leyton, London E10 6PJ

- www.leytonstories.org.uk
- www.citystorieshere.com
- www.newportschool.org.uk
- www.newportchildrencentre.org.uk

Authors and Publishers:

For more information contact Nicky Potter, Publicity Officer for Frances Lincoln, 020 7284 4009

Authors online:

- www.franceslincoln.com
- www.jonnyzucker.com
- www.michaelamorgan.com

Organisers - Leyton Stories and children's literacy specialists:

*For more information contact Sue Martin
London office 020 7193 7905
Cambridge office 01223 839644*

- www.dolphinbooksellers.co.uk
Children's book information and blog – always available
- www.smithmartinpartnership.com
The project partnership that brings you City Stories events
- www.thirdsectorweb.co.uk
Community web sites delivered in support of your literacy and reading projects

Additional links

- www.literacytrust.org.uk
- www.fcbg.org.uk
- www.readingforlife.org.uk
- www.walthamforest.gov.uk