

HAMPSHIRE YOUNG CREATIVES: PERFORMANCE POETRY



The People

Hampshire Young Creatives
First Partnership
Samuel Cody School
St Mark's Primary School
Newport Junior School
Michael James Parker

The Project

Pupils from Samuel Cody School, St Mark's Primary School and Newport Junior School each took part in three workshops (making nine in total) with artist Michael James Parker.

Workshop 1 introduced the concept of Performance Poetry, sowed the seeds of ideas for the children's poems and began the writing process. The children also saw a performance of Michael James Parker's own work.

Workshop 2 built on the writing process, with an emphasis on interpretation and the performance of the work. Initial rehearsals took place.

Workshop 3 covered performance techniques, refining the poetry and full rehearsals, culminating a final performance in front of all participants and a panel of selected judges. Samuel Cody student Poetry Mentors were on hand to assist and gave a performance themselves as a finale.

Michael [Parker] really helped even the shyest pupil feel confident enough to perform.



Teacher, Newport Junior School

Successes

- The integration of pupils from a range of ages and abilities. The wide-ranging group were able to benefit from the project and build inter-school relationships.

The use of language was particularly impressive – the children created very strong images and fluent storylines.



Linda Barnes, Final Performance Judge

- The involvement of the Samuel Cody Poetry Mentors. They were able to build their self-confidence by acting as mentors for the rest of the group. Following their performance at the finale, they were also invited to perform in their own right at the Area Primary Schools Sports Presentation evening, where they were a huge success.
- Time management for the large number of pupils taking part. Enthusiasm generated for the project helped to improve levels of cooperation and coordination between participating schools, and will be the foundation for successes in any future collaboration.

Challenges

- Partner School recruitment – three of the four original partner schools dropped out before funding was confirmed. This was due to the proposed timetable clashing with Primary SATS week.
- Arts Award accreditation – this was sadly due to a lack of time to complete the workbooks. The delay to the start of the project brought about by the need to recruit alternate partner schools meant that there was insufficient time before the end of the school year for the children to complete their workbooks and have them moderated. However, the plan is to pick up this aspect in the Autumn Term, as part of Samuel Cody's Artsmark Award application process.
- Transporting pupils from partner schools to the site.
- Travel and hosting arrangements for Michael Parker, who is based in Brighton.

- Replacement of partner schools that dropped out of the project.

Suggested improvements for future projects

- Consider the timing of the project more carefully and ensure it avoids clashing with KS2 tests.
- Try to book the poet earlier in the process – however, booking artists is dependent on confirmation of funding.
- Recruit partner schools directly, rather than through the area Sport Liaison Officer.

Recommendations for other organisations doing similar projects

- Having a professional poet on hand is vital to the success of the project. Find a really good individual who fits your precise needs, or can adapt to them. We would highly recommend the organisation Apples and Snakes for their help in signposting suitable people.

How could the project partners best support this kind of work in the future?

- Ensure sufficient funding is available to support and encourage cross-phase participation.
- Match the funding process, application and project delivery deadlines to the Academic Year rather than the Financial or Tax Year.

The children's vivid imaginations created thought-provoking poems. I learnt a great deal about our children and they blossomed in this event.

Teacher, Newport Junior School



I found the poetry workshop very exciting!



Pupil, Newport Junior School

Credits

Taken from: Hampshire Young Creatives Development Programme 2012/13 Report and Recommendations

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