COMIC POTENTIAL

A COMICS AND LITERACY PROJECT

How far does engagement with comics positively affect children's enjoyment of reading and wellbeing?

The COMIC POTENIAL PROJECT

Background

From April 2021 until May 2022 Lakes International Comic Art Festival (LICAF), with funding from Creative Europe via the Comic Art Europe consortium, delivered a programme of activity at Abraham Moss Community School (AMCS) in Manchester aimed at understanding the potential of comics to improve pupils' enjoyment of reading and as a result improve literacy, reading confidence and wellbeing for these pupils. The project focused on Year 3 pupils, in classes with high levels of children with English as a second language and in receipt of pupil premium.

The Key Areas and the findings from this project were…

Reading behaviour – engagement with comics led to children's reading ages increasing at a faster rate and inspired an appreciation for reading more widely.

Attitudes to reading – enjoyment of reading increased at home and in school and pupils encountered fewer difficulties when reading.

Identifying as a reader – children developed an appreciation of books in the form of gifts and interacted with books more willingly amongst their peers.

Motivation to read recreationally – reading became a favourite pastime for more pupils. Fewer pupils regarded it as their least favourite pursuit.

Willingness for and confidence in book talk – children engaged in more conversations at home about reading and felt more positive about reading in front of their classmates.

Creativity – children's perceptions of their own creative abilities improved and art, writing and attending school became more exciting.

Wellbeing – children took more pride in and felt happier with themselves.

The Comic Potential Project

LICAF felt this first pilot project had produced promising results, but that further research was required in different communities to understand if the outcomes would be the same. It was keen to look at schools in a predominantly white working class and economically challenged community and in special schools where the age range of pupils within the same class was much wider. The Comic Potential Project was developed to understand if the impact of comics in the classroom would differ in these two differing environments.

Comic Potential delivered a two-year programme to once again understand how comics could support the same Key Areas adopted at Abraham Moss Community School…

Reading behaviour

Attitudes to reading

Identifying as a reader

Motivation to read recreationally

Willingness for and confidence in book talk

Creativity

Wellbeing

Additionally, Comic Potential sought to understand how comics could play a wider role in the curriculum with a range of transferable skills and the use of comics in teaching History was identified as another indicator for the project

LICAF was also keen to understand how the introduction of metacognition techniques whilst delivering comic workshops could increase their impact and all artists and LICAF staff delivering activity in the classroom were trained in the use of metacognition; along with the overall purpose of the project and the key indicators being adopted so they could more fully support its objectives

School Partners

The following schools were partners in the Comic Potential Project

- **George Hastwell School, Barrow-in-Furness** – SEND specialist school
- **Sandgate School, Kendal** – SEND specialist school
- **Cambridge Primary School, Barrow-in-Furness**
- **Vickerstown Primary School, Barrow-in-Furness**

The primary schools supported their Year 3 class to participate in the project, over two academic years. Similarly, all pupils at the SEND specialist schools aged 11 – 16 were supported to engage with the project for two years.
LICAF acknowledges the hard work and support of Governors and all the teaching staff in all four schools in delivering the Comic Potential project

Set Up

LICAF was able to retain the team responsible for delivering the project at Abraham Moss Community School, and as the project production team (PPT) for ComPot were able to ensure comparison between the two projects was credible. Simeon Leech was a primary school teacher in Barrow-in- Furness for several years and Hester Harrington is an art teacher in a secondary school near Kendal. This meant we were able to engage teachers in our host schools ahead of application to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and during the setup of the project there was a level of trust in our team from their previous work in those communities.

Similarly, using our links to arts organisations in Furness, LICAF was able to recruit Chris Harris, an experienced head teacher with roots in the Furness region and currently living in that community, as the person coordinating data collection and liaison with teachers about metacognition techniques and data collection.

Professor Andrew Miles, Director of Research at the School of Social Sciences, University of Manchester continued to oversee the research criterion for the ComPot project and subsequent data collection and interpretation, as he did for the AMCS project.

Comic Potential Programme

Appendix 1 – the Comic Potential Anthology outlines the programme delivered over a period of two academic years.

Project Outcomes

The following Outcomes were agreed between the LICAF and Paul Hamlyn Foundation teams ahead of the start of the project

For Pupils - regular engagement with comics; improved behaviours around reading and motivation to read recreationally; development of skills to support storytelling, writing and drawing; a greater sense of confidence and well-being through techniques for self-expression; improved readiness for upper Keystage 3.

For Teachers - understanding of how comics can support teaching, equipped with a range of comic-based techniques to support pupils' learning across the curriculum; access to a range of online teaching resources and guides to support future teaching; improved positive culture of reading in their classes.

For the Education Settings - awareness of the learning and wellbeing potentials of using comics in the curriculum; and a more expressive and creative culture in the schools, which can be sustained by teachers.

This report aims to illustrate how the project addressed and how successful it was in delivering these objectives.

Project Outcomes against Objectives for Pupils

The following information suggest how the project has sought to address the Outcomes established at the start of the project and is supported by the detailed data contained in **Appendix 2 & 3**

Improved reading behaviours for pupils

A key aim of the project was to see if a focus on understanding the skills and conventions of comic production and an enthusiastic engagement with comics could address the chronically low enthusiasm amongst pupils of this age for reading. Data seems to suggest that student reading behaviours in the schools have shown a marked improvement, over the period, both from the teacher perspective (data set 2) and from the student perspective (data set 3).

We must consider this against the falling tide of motivation to read recreationally amongst students aged 5-8 both nationally and internationally (Reading Zone study June 2023 https://www.readingzone.com/ : In the UK, the number of children and young people who report enjoying reading is now at its lowest level since 2005, with 48.9% report only enjoying it 'a bit' or 'not at all' (Cole et al. Citation2022a).). In this context positive outcomes from this project could be seen as swimming against that tide.

We must also bear in mind that the two-year project, extensive as it was, contained eight workshops and two library immersion half days. Effectively this amounts to nine school working days from a total of four hundred and fifty available school days. This represents 2% of curriculum time in each of the two years. Given the relatively short exposure the overwhelmingly positive data would argue that something of significance has taken place.

Staff across the schools have identified a greater preparedness amongst the pupils to identify as readers, showing a greater willingness to talk about their reading and to identify as a reader. This was borne out from observations of the highly charged workshops and post workshop interviews with pupils. This enthusiasm, more importantly, appears to have been sustained throughout the duration of the project.

Pupils have shown a clear increase in their enthusiasm to choose reading as an activity, primarily in school, and again their obvious enjoyment was observed in the workshops but perhaps more importantly in the library immersion days which could have been flat and difficult but were well ordered and enthusiastic.

This increased enthusiasm to identify as a reader does not appear to extend to home. Again, this is confirmed by teacher and student perspectives. This also accords with the research alluded to above. It appears that, for the majority of students in our study, school is the place where learning takes place and enthusiasm for reading can be fostered. The fact that this does not extend to the home may reflect the ability of adults in school to create an atmosphere supported by skills based on research in which most students can flourish, this is very difficult to replicate at home for many parents and carers.

Development of skills to support storytelling writing and drawing

Post workshop studies were emphatic in showing a, nearly, blanket love of drawing. The workshops, many of which focussed on how to draw and how to show facial expressions did impart skills which the pupils could replicate enabling them to express their story telling but also to do so in a way they felt satisfied and often proud of. One of the features of the series of workshops was each student producing their own comic or zine which was reproduced and available in the local libraries, thereby allowing each student to see themselves as an author.

One of the subsidiary aims of the project was to address and explain what we called a **metacognitive** approach to learning. We know from the EEF (Education Endowment Fund) that metacognition and self-regulation has *'very high impact for very low cost based on extensive evidence'.* In fact, it has an 'effect size' of 7 months meaning, used well, it can advance learning against an age-related scale by 7 months. Before the project began, we worked with the artists to help them understand what a metacognitive approach to their workshop would look like. The data suggests a degree of success here with students considering, in advance, how to approach a given task and reviewing the completed task, thus enabling the skills that they had learnt and brought to story-telling to have greater traction and durability because of the element of pre-task planning and post-task review.

A greater sense of confidence and well-being through techniques for self-expression

The vast majority of data from the project indicates improvement in pupil confidence and well-being. Behaviour in workshops and in other settings was, anecdotally, significantly better than

the norm for these students, especially in the two special schools, which also suggests an improvement in student wellbeing.

Improved readiness for upper key stage 2

Although the only specific question to staff in data set 4 would suggest some improvement (40%) that is still nearly half the cohort and if you couple with this improved reading and writing outcomes then perhaps it is legitimate to say that on average students from the project are more ready for upper key stage 2 than they would have been without the experience of the project.

Project Outcomes against Objectives for teachers

Understanding how comics can support reading and using comic-based skills across the curriculum

This is one of the most positive outcomes of the project. The data would suggest that staff have not only engaged with the project but have seen the potential of using the skills to address other parts of the curriculum. It looks likely that at least three of the four schools will extend the project skills and focus even without funding. The school management, in the four schools, have grasped the significance of the project and we feel optimistic about the long-term impact of this project.

Improved positive culture of reading in class

There is ample data to suggest that teachers have been able to use the project to improve the culture of reading in the class and observations of the workshops and work done, related to reading, post workshop would suggest the same.

Many of the students choose to read a comic when they have a free choice of reading material, knowing now, as they do, just how a comic is constructed, deepening their engagement with it. The weekly Phoenix was for many students an absolute thrill but again it was interesting to note that this worked best when the Phoenix arrived in school rather than being posted home. This emphasises again the difference in reading culture at school and at home.

Project Outcomes against Objectives for the Education Setting

Awareness of the learning and wellbeing potentials of using comics in the curriculum and creating a more expressive and creative culture in the schools

Data set 4 suggests, as commented above, that there is real awareness of the potential of using comics in the curriculum. The data appendix 1 shows that teachers have used the comic format in a diverse range of subjects from art to science with the use of skills in the humanities as well. All the answers in that data set suggest that it is not only the individual class teacher but the institution as well that grasps the potential. This is further supported by firm requests from the two special schools to fund themselves further workshops and evidence that one of the primary

schools intend to write comic skills into their scheme of work in key stage 1 for use in key stage 2.

There is ample reason for optimism both from the data and from the stated intentions of the schools that use of comics and their concomitant skills will be part of creating a more vibrant, expressive and creative culture in the schools.

It is interesting to note that Sabba Khan, one of our workshop leaders who, as well as being a professional comic artist, teaches on the BA Interiors at the Chelsea School of Art and on the London School of Architecture for their Critical Practice Module attests that the comic format is used at this level to demonstrate project concepts and ideas. This suggests that the real potential of the comic format is already being grasped at an academic level.

Progress & Challenges

LICAF believes the Comic Potential has made a compelling case for the use of comics in primary schools and SEND schools. When considered in association with the evidence presented by the Abraham Moss Community School project we believe there is a strong case to be made for the adoption of comics in all classroom, wherever the schools is based and for pupils of all abilities. We believe the pressing and urgent need for learning support for all pupils but especially for those with SEND needs means that an early adoption of comics in the classroom should be considered and our advocacy activity at a time of recent change in government, noted below, will continue; using the evidence of Comic Potential as the reason why comics have a place in education.

I believe LICAF are more confident as project developers, coordinators and deliverers. We have become more confident about working in partnership with delivery partners like schools and more relaxed at making projects a collaborative process. We have become more skilled at briefing, training and consulting with artists and partners delivering our programme and feel we have developed a network of partners schools who are convinced of the case for comics in the classroom, keen to spread the word about their positive impact to colleagues and work with LICAF on projects in the future.

The challenges of delivering a long two-year project on LICAF's small team and the pressure last minute changes to the scheduled programme can bring to the delivery of the learning programme have become clear and LICAF now understands how important early planning at the right time in the academic cycle is. We are also more aware that collecting data from teachers

during small windows of time os challenging and that face to face time with teachers and researchers is the most efficient way to achieve the required outcomes.

LICAF's Practice

Perhaps the greatest learning and change to LICAF's practice has been around the practical delivery of projects over a considerable timescale….

Schools/ Evaluation – The ever-increasing workload faced by schools and teachers has heightened LICAF's awareness that consultation and the supply of appropriate information at the right time is key to the successful delivery of this type of evidence-based project. During the delivery of the project, it was important to produce a programme of activity well ahead of the academic year and discuss this in the less intense summer term so contact and discussion in the busy autumn term was kept to a minimum. LICAF also needed to be adaptive to last minute changes to the programme because of personnel change, school absences, timetabling issues etc. This was especially acute in Barrow, where the recruitment pool for teachers and teaching assistants is small. And replacement staff slow to appear.

At times, especially when data collection was time-sensitive, the LICAF team needed to replace teachers to collect data from pupils on time. Similarly collecting data inputted by teachers often required the LICAF team to be in the same space, supporting teachers. However, it was clear that having an experienced teacher responsible for creating surveys and data collection bore fruit; they could speak the same language and had an intimate knowledge of schools. LICAF is confident that future projects requiring research, data collection and evaluation would be more skilled at consulting with teachers, devising data sets and collecting data.

Artists – LICAF introduced a new and more rigorous approach to the involvement of comic artists in the classroom during CP1. Two training sessions were an integral part of the programme and during recruitment artists were informed that attendance at a CPD session was required. We took particular care to brief artists about the overall aims of the project, the outcomes anticipated and how their participation fitted into the overall programme. Artists, some of them very experienced at working in the classroom, were encouraged to share their experience of workshop delivery and a shared approach to the Comic Potential workshops was agreed. Artists were also briefed on metacognition techniques and how these should be incorporated into their teaching. They were also required to develop teaching plans for their workshops, with identified outputs and outcomes, which were reviewed and adapted by the LICAF team. After each workshop artists were required to report on their workshop, its strengths and if it had met the stated outcomes.

This more structured approach to workshop delivery ensured each one supported the overall objectives of the project and supported the rest of the programme. Because a shared approach was adopted, the evaluation of the programme could be more specific and nuanced artists reported the CPD sessions helped them to develop their skills in the classroom and improve their impact by adopting techniques like metacognition.

This approach to the use of artists in LICAF projects will be adopted and developed into the future.

SEND – ComPot 1 has indicated that comics have a significant role to play in encouraging reading enjoyment, supporting learning across a wide range of subjects and areas of the curriculum and in encouraging creativity in the classroom for SEND specialist and primary pupils.

The marked post-Covid rise in pupils registered as needing SEND support in the classroom and the spike in pupils absent from school due to mental illness, are powerful reasons why comics should be incorporated into the classroom. However, LICAF believes this urgent rush to support SEND pupils shouldn't restrict comics place in teaching to those with particular specialist needs but be adopted for pupils of all abilities, because their positive impact is so marked. LICAF's challenge will be to reflect these two subtly different aspects of comics in education in future practice and advocacy.

Advocacy – over the period of delivery of the Comic Potential project LICAF has continued to advocate for comics in the classroom. Along with evidence from previous projects, LICAF could point to the Comic Potential project and it's funding by the PHF, as significant support for our approach. Recent meetings with those in parliament, where Comic Potential was referenced, include Lord Storey (Lib Dem Speaker on Education in the House of Lords) – advocating for LICAF to present to the task forces on culture and education. Jonathan Reynolds (Secretary for Business and Trade) interested in our work supporting autism and Lisa Nandy (Secretary for DCMS), plus Charlie Taylor (HM Inspector for Prisons) - regarding role of comics in education in prisons.

Our work in classrooms was the subject of the keynote presentation at Comics Up Close, an academic symposium hosted by the University of Manchester and attended by academics across the UK in February '23. It has formed the basis for partnerships with academic institutions, including Cambridge, Sheffield Hallam, Cumbria, Manchester and Newcastle Universities.

As part of its latest NPO funding agreement with Arts Council England, LICAF has emphasised its role as a development agency for comics. ACE has also offered additional funding to LICAF for a "nationally significant" project to establish the first UK rights market for British comics and promote new work to significant overseas comic markets. LICAF understands that although it can take a lead, it needs partner organisations to work in parallel and in conjunction to develop the adoption of comics in the classroom. This increasingly collegiate approach to our practice includes working with organisations and consortia like the Comics Cultural Impact Collective, Creative UK Leaders Forum, Thought Bubble and Broken Frontier

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Organisational Achievements and Challenges

LICAF continues to deliver its funded programme of delivery as an Arts Council England NPO. Additionally, the organisation was awarded additional funding for a "programme of national significance" delivering the first UK Rights Market, bringing European and UK publishers of comics into face to face meetings with emerging comic talent and promoting new British comics at key international festivals. This work harmonises with our strategic ambition to act as a development agency for UK comics – a key element of our NPO activity. Our advocacy activity for the role of comics in education and as part of the UK's wider cultural capital, harmonises with this work through NPO funding and the Rights Market.

LICAF continues to develop a close relationship with the British Council, delivering two projects highlighting the climate emergency and two celebrating comics from the Arabic-speaking world and Palestinian comic artists. LICAF continues to be a truly international organisation with projects and partnerships in over 30 countries.

Stand still funding from ACE and other core funders in a time of inflation continues to be a challenge for LICAF. Core expenditure has been trimmed to the bone and maintaining the quality and the diversity of our festival programme and year-round activity is challenging. Project funding continues to support our ambitions for excellence and innovation; and as comics continue to attract notice for their democratic nature, unique qualities and particular properties, LICAF has been able to sustain its strategic plans and objectives.

Funded Development Work

LICAF now seeks translate the learning from Comic Potential and the Abraham Moss Community School project into easily accessible resources and methodologies, created by the LICAF team of educators in meaningful consultation with teachers and lecturers. In particular we will seek to explore the exceptional outcomes for pupils in SEND schools and will synthetise these into meaningful teacher resources and explore how these can also be adopted by teachers for pupils with SEND needs in regular primary schools.

This will mean the ambition of LICAF to advocate for the unique properties of comics to be adopted across primary education has travelled from thorough independently reviewed research to a package of information and interventions relevant to teachers delivering their work in the very pressured situation of the National Curriculum.

We also aim to develop our role as a development agency for comics with especial focus on developing the careers of early-stage autistic and working-class comic artists. Key partners in this work include Cambridge University, the Comics Cultural Impact Collective, and Comic Book UK.

LICAF's relationship with the British Council continues to develop, with new projects in Palestine and Kazakhstan in development.

Lakes International Comic Art Festival Team

November 2024

COMIC POTENTIAL

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How far does engagement with comics positively affect children's enjoyment of reading and wellbeing?

A two-year project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Appendix 1

Comic Potential Anthology

Rational, aims and objectives...

For Pupils:

- to have regular engagement with comics
- to improve behaviours around reading and motivation to read recreationally
- to develop skills to support storytelling, writing and drawing
- to have a greater sense of confidence and well-being through techniques for self-expression
- to improve readiness for upper Keystage 2

For Teachers:

- to develop an understanding of how comics can support reading
- to be equipped with a range of comic-based techniques to support pupils' learning across the curriculum
- to have access to a range of online teaching resources and guides to support future teaching
- to develop an improved positive culture of reading in their classes

For the Education Settings:

- to raise awareness of the learning and wellbeing potentials of using comics in the curriculum
- to create a more expressive and creative culture in the schools, which can be sustained by teachers

Schools Involved...

We worked with two SEND specialist schools and two primary schools.

Hester Harrington Lead:

Sandgate School
Sandylands
Road Kendal
Cumbria
LA9
6JG

Approx 17 mixed secondary age SEND Pupils

https://www.sandgateschool.org.uk

George Hastwell School
Moor Tarn Lane
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA14 3LW

Approx 15 mixed secondary age SEND Pupils

https://georgehastwell.org.uk

Sim Leech Lead:

Cambridge Primary School
Cambridge Street
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA13 9RP
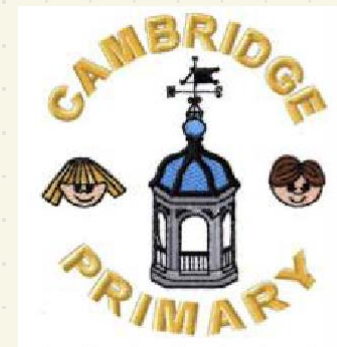
Approx 30 Y3 (in first year of project) pupils

https://www.cambridge.cumbria.sch.uk

Vickerstown School
Mill Lane
Barrow-in-Furness
Cumbria
LA14 3XY

Approx 25 Y3 (in first year of project) pupils

http://www.vickerstown.cumbria.sch.uk

Workshops and Visits

In each year of the project we provided five workshops and a visit to the festival (at the start of the next school year). The broad content of each workshop was the same, but changes were made to suit the needs of the diﬀerent schools and pupils. Each workshop was designed to use the particular talents and specialities of the artists, but at the same time build on previous workshops, so we made sure that the artists knew what each other were doing.

Three of the workshops were led by professional artists, two led by Lakes International Comic Art Festival staﬀ:

Hester Harrington

Hester is an experienced educator and creative facilitator specialising in art, comics and visual literacy. With over 20 years in teaching and curriculum design, she creates dynamic, student-centered resources that integrate comics and creative learning opportunities into education. Currently, Hester is developing a series of comic-based learning tools for schools, funded by the Arts Council's 'Develop Your Creative Practice' grant. Her recent work explores how comics can enhance engagement and learning across various subjects for students aged 8-14.

Sim Leech

Sim is a former primary school teacher, who has also worked for Cumbria County Council's Family Learning team, STEM Cumbria and the University of Cumbria. He has worked on the Lakes International Comic Art Festival since its first year in 2013, and has been involved in teaching comic workshops to local South Cumbrian Schools, and a two year comic project at Abraham Moss school in Manchester. When not working for LICAF he is a street performer, and a volunteer member of a mountain rescue team.

Year One Workshops...

1. Introductory Workshop - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

www.comicartfestival.com @littlelicaf @lakesinternationalcomics
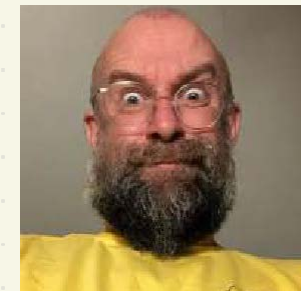

2. Artist Workshop - Marc Jackson

http://www.creativehero.co.uk/MarcMakesComics/ @marcmakescomics
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCFQYOqnHF8HdYuVsa8yQl4w

3. Artist Workshop - Mollie Ray

http://www.mollieray.co.uk @mollierayillustration

4. Artist Workshop - Jim Medway

http://jimmedway.com @catdrawerjim

5. Library Engagement Day - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

6. Festival Visit 2023 - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

Year Two Workshops...

1. Introductory Workshop - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

2. Artist Workshop - Matt Smith

http://www.smithvssmith.com/about
@smithvssmithcomics

3. Artist Workshop - Sabba Khan

https://sabbakhan.com
@sabbakhanart

4. Artist Workshop - Alastair Fleming

https://vaguemonkey.bigcartel.com
@vaguemonkey

5. Mini Festival Day - Sim Leech
    Library Engagement Day 2 - Hester Harrington

6. Festival Visit 2024 - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

Other Project Input

CPD Sessions for all school staṭ Ä Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

Artist Briefing, Debriefing and Mentoring - Hester Harrington, Sim Leech, Richard Foster and Chris Harris

Phoenix Comic - Delivered weekly to pupils' homes or schools.
https://thephoenixcomic.co.uk

Class Library - a number of comic books, covering a variety of topics, interests and reading abilities were provided for each of the participating classes. These were introduced in batches over the two years, in order to build up a class library

Online video content - four video tutorials were produced to highlight ways in which comics could be used in the classroom. These are for circulation beyond the four schools involved and have been promoted on The Lakes International Comic Art Festival's social media:

Sequences in Comics

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-wW7vs-

XBm0&t=226s Speech and Thought Bubbbles

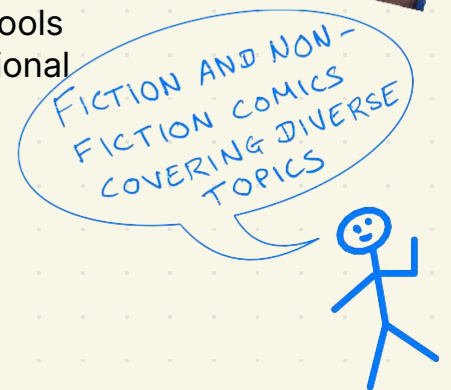https://youtu.be/kModfJNQJBA?si=Lv4mlqmplUGb0OkF

Splash Pages

https://youtu.be/SrZ7nnGYOSl?si=9q_p39bkb9ArR9X0

Zines

https://youtu.be/va6bhdRLv_Y?si=3VuoKnoOWkYhiAo1

Year One Workshop 1 - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

This workshop was intended to introduce pupils, and school staṭ, to comics.
They were introduced to diṭerent types of comics, the breadth of content available in the comic medium and to common comic features such as panels, gutters, character expressions, speech and thought bubbles, exclamations, sound eṭects and so on.
Pupils had an opportunity to read a variety of comic books, alone or with others, and to have comics read to them.
They created simple expression faces, practiced drawing speech, thought and exclamation bubbles and followed a video workshop to create a Looshkin character drawing.

WE FOUND OUT THAT COMICS ARE A MEDIUM. THEY ARE MADE OF PANELS AND GUTTERS. THE SEQUENCE OF PICTURES TELLS THE STORY
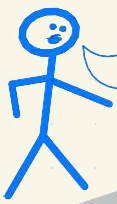
SOME OF THOSE FACIAL EXPRESSIONS LOOK A BIT SCARY!

WOW!

THERE ARE SOME OF THE EXCLAMATION WORDS WE LOOKED AT...

LOOK! LOOSHKINS!

Year One Workshop 2 - Marc Jackson

Marc's workshop encouraged pupils to draw large, dynamic pictures, promoting self-confidence and creativity. They were shown how to draw crazy characters using large, A3 paper and bright marker pens. They made their drawings look more dynamic by adding sound eﬀects, movement lines and shadows. Pupils were taught how to do speech, thought, robot, whisper, and shout bubbles properly - always doing the writing first then the bubble afterwards...

They played a game where ten random objects were revealed and they had to make a montage picture containing all of the objects

Some lucky children even got to draw Mr T!
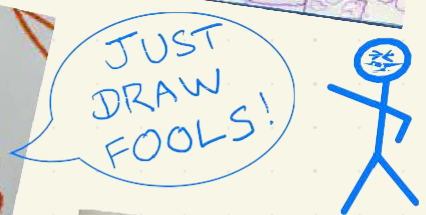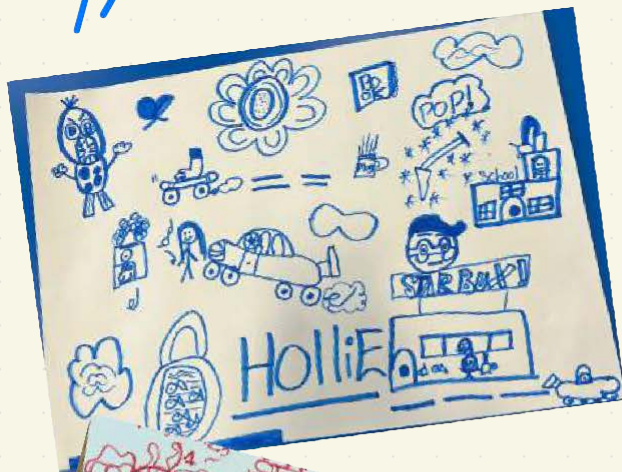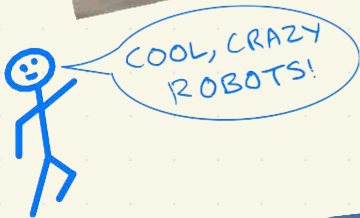
Year One Workshop 3 - Mollie Ray

In Mollie's workshop pupils looked more closely at giving characters facial expressions that communicated their emotions and feelings. They changed the eyes, nose, eyebrows, creases, mouth and face shape to create a variety of expressive faces and characters.
Then they looked in depth at the use of panels and gutters to show sequences that portray the passage of time in comics. They created short comic strips that showed long and short passage of time in their sequences. Finally pupils were shown how to use textures and marks to create characters who looked, for example, hairy, made of metal, wood etc. They also used water brushes to add diﬀerent eﬀects to their work.
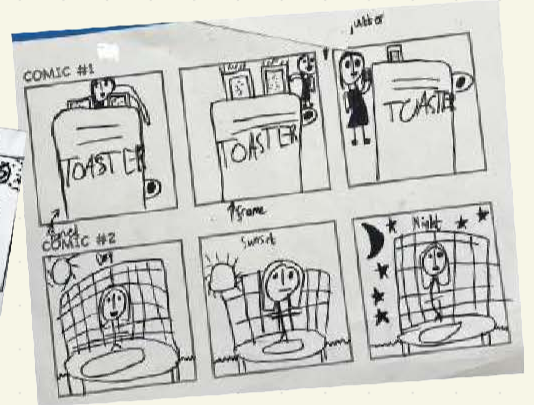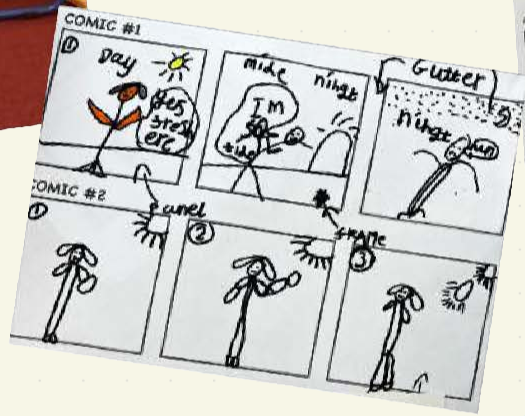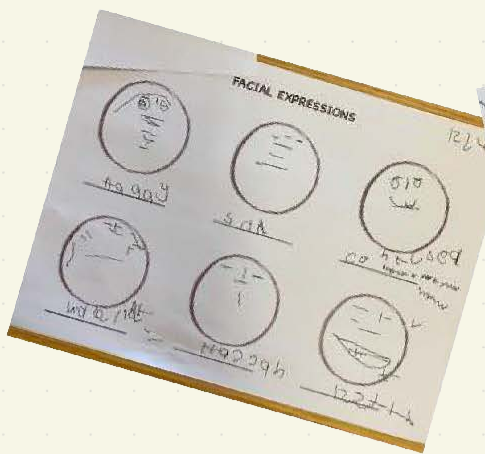
Year One Workshop 4 - Jim Medway

Jim's session built on the previous two artist workshops. He introduced the pupils to anthropomorphism, showing them examples of his work, which involved characters drawn as cats.He explained some of his inspirations for stories, including observations of people's behaviour whle he is out and about. Pupils practiced drawing anthropomorphic characters, including themselves as cats.

They played a game where they drew two cards, one an animal, one a job or role, and they had to draw the resulting character - eg a pirate squirrel, a police badger etc. They rounded up the day by choosing a class anthropomorphic character - each child drew that same character at a diṭ erent time of day, then these pictures were put in time order to show a day in the life of that character.

THAT CLASS CHARACTER WAS AN OWL FOOTBALLER. WE CALLED HIM "RONOWLDO"! THAT'S JIM PUTTING THE STORY OF HIS DAY IN ORDER...
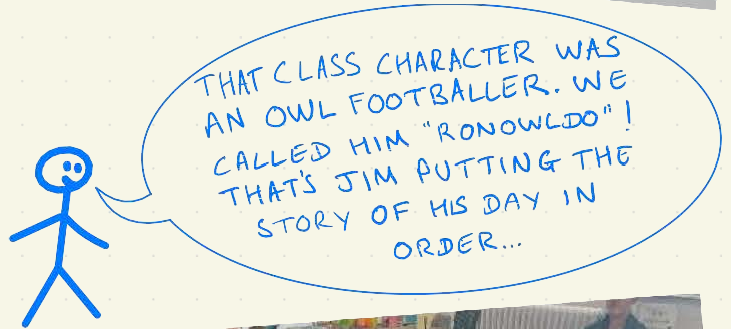
Year One Workshop 5 - Library Engagement Day

This visit was intended to encourage children to visit their local, or town centre, library, as many of them were not members.
Once at the library (Barrow or Kendal, depending on the school), they took part in a round robin of activities in small groups - for example listening to comic stories as audiobooks, reading comics on the Kindle app on tablets, reading comics while having snacks and biscuits, camping out (reading inside a tent with a torch) and so on. The idea was to get them to realise new opportunities for reading time, rather than the usual reading sessions with parents, or in school.

YUM!

MMMM... SNACKS AND COMICS!

Year One - Festival Visit

Activities varied according to school. The primary school children and pupils from George Hastwell SEND specialist school visited the Lakes International Comic Art Festival. They took part in a workshop presented at the Jetty Museum, then had to opportunity to look at an exhibition.
They could then walk into Bowness to see some of their work exhibited in business windows as part of the Comic Art Trail.
Sandgate SEND specialist school visited the Jetty Museum on an alternative day for a workshop led by Mollie Ray. The session provided pupils with the experience of comics outside of the classroom, explored personification and a range of diﬀerent creative comic activities including badge making.

OUR WORK ON SHOW!

Year Two Workshop 1 - Hester Harrington/Sim Leech

This first year two workshop, led by Hester or Sim, re-capped previous workshops, plus it introduced the idea of "splash pages" - where comic artists use a full page, or even a double page, for one large picture or panel. This might be to introduce characters, or a setting, to emphasise the importance of a particular part of a narrative, or to provide some technical details in a picture.

Activities varied depending on which school the workshop took place in, but for example some of the pupils drew on previous history lessons to draw splash pages about Ancient Egypt, or Greece.

SPLASH PAGES ABOUT AMAZING MACHINES

OR

ABOUT REMEMBRANCE DAY

SPLASH!

OR... ANCIENT GREECE!

Year Two Workshop 2 - Matt Smith

Matt's workshop built further on work from previous workshops. Pupils were shown how to change camera angles in a story, to make each panel focus more purposefully, and make the sequences more dynamic. They looked at using sound eﬀects, and diﬀerent levels of sound in comics. Matt introduced emanata, and showed how they can add an extra level of expression and emotion to characters.
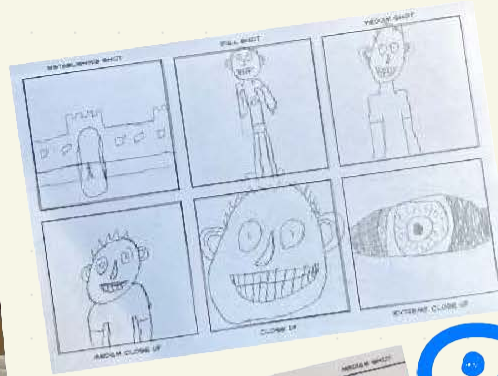
Year Two Workshop 3 - Sabba Khan

In Sabba's workshop pupils were encouraged to create interesting characters. They played "exquisite corpse" to find ways to make up new characters. They used themselves as characters in stories about their morning, or about their journey to school. Some pupils' produced these stories as zines, others as splash page maps. They also looked at using bold, black lines to pick out important details and outlines in their drawing.

WE MADE THESE SURPRISE CREATURE CHARACTERS BY FOLDING THE PAPER SO WE COULDN'T SEE THEM UNTIL THE END...

AAAARGH!
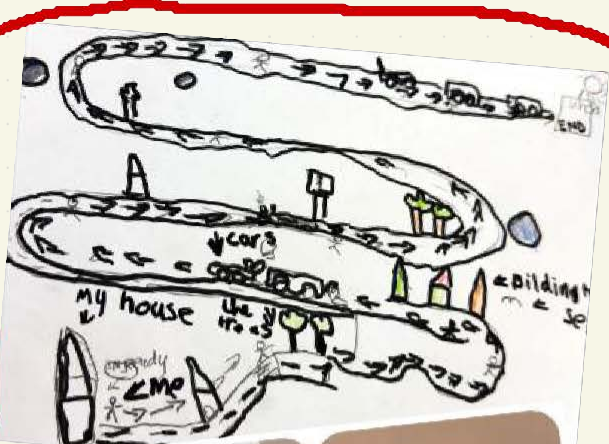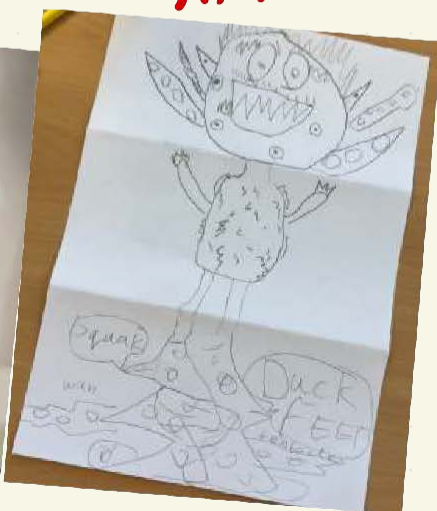
OUR JOURNEY TO SCHOOL

Year Two Workshop 4 - Alastair Fleming

Alastair's workshop looked at using sequences of comic panels to show activities that could be broken down into steps, so using comic features to produce instructions. As Alastair is a professional juggler, he used juggling as an example, then asked pupils to produce sequences about their chosen activities. He also showed them how to produce single panels that give instructions using comic features. Finally Alastair talked about his work in the film industry and the link between comics and animation - pupils then had a go at making flip books...
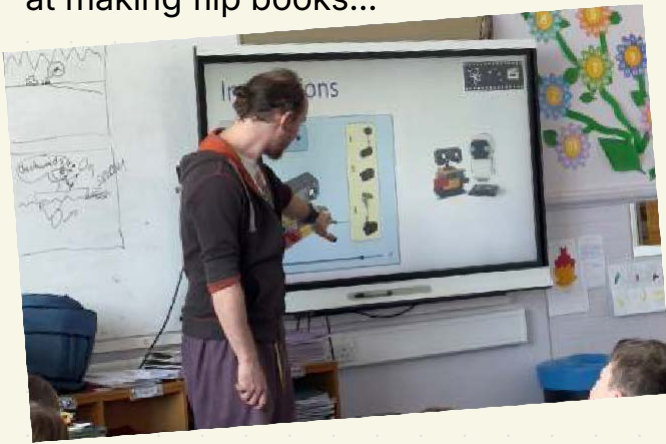
JUGGLE!
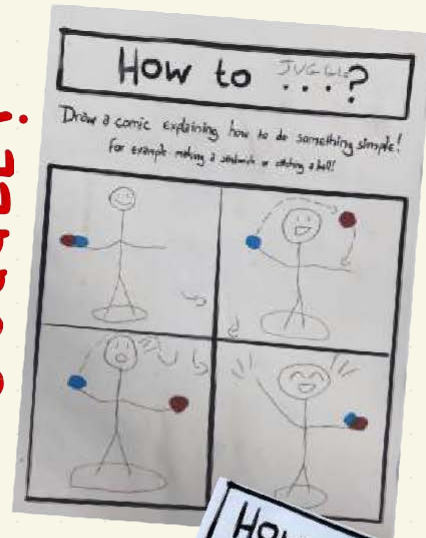
NO !

DRAW A BEE!
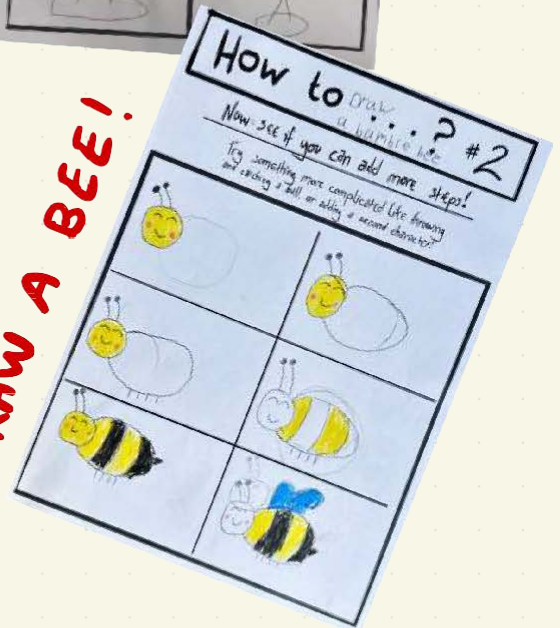
THESE FLIP BOOKS WERE FUN TO MAKE

Year Two Workshop 5 - Mini Festival - Sim Leech
Cambridge Primary/Vickerstown Primary

This workshop was intended to give pupils a chance to put on a festival of their own, in order to practice some of their new skills, and show other classes what they had done. At Vickerstown children designed five comic related activities, set up a round robin of resources, then guest classes came to take part in these. Cambridge Primary pupils followed a similar process, but the Vickerstown pupils came to visit them at shcool to take part in the activities, where they shared their learning and experiences. Children from some of the other Cambridge classes, teachers and other staﬀ came along too to find out what pupils taking part in the project had been learning...

WE MADE A BIG LIST OF ACTIVITIES THEN CUT IT DOWN
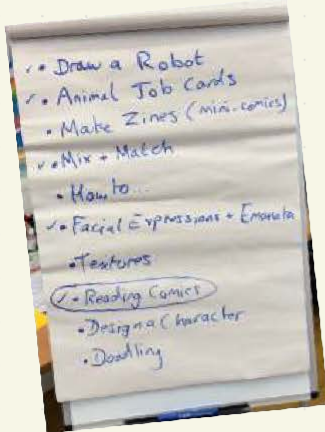
POSTERS TO ADVERTISE

ONLINE DRAWING WORKSHOP

SOUND EFFECT BADGES

ZINE MAKING

MANGA EXHIBITION

Year Two Workshop 5 - Library Engagement Day 2 - Hester Harrington
George Hastwell/Sandgate

The library engagement day for year two invited pupils to attended a morning comic session at their local library. After a brief welcome, students rotated through activities, including badge-making, a drawing tutorial, zine exploration, and independent book selection. Badge-making linked to literacy with onomatopoeia-themed designs, followed by a drawing session using Phoenix comic tutorials. Pupils displayed zines they had previously created with artist Sabba Khan, documenting their journey from home to school, and there were opportunities to explore Manga. The session concluded with pupils browsing the library and borrowing books. This session encouraged creativity, visual literacy, and reading for pleasure through interactive, comic-based activities.

COOL LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Year Two - Festival Visit

The two primary schools visited The Jetty Museum again, this time to have a look at the Doctor Who exhibition. They also had an opportunity to see compilations of their work, taken from the two years of the project, displayed in shop windows.

As an extra treat they went for a look around the Beatrix Potter Attraction some of the pupils made Beatrix Potter comics before the visit...

Students from the SEND specialist schools were given free festival passes so that they had the opportunity to visit the festival with parents or

HERE'S OUR WORK IN SHOP WINDOWS!

Further Use Of Comics In The Classroom

Sometimes pupils were given, or took (!) opportunities to use comic formats and features in other areas of school work, outside of our workshops...
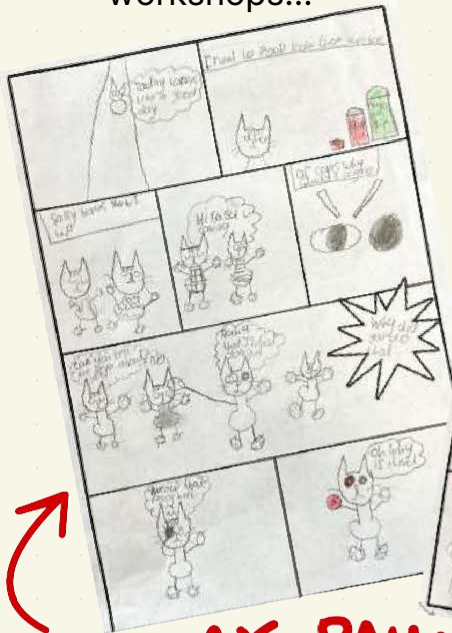
FRENCH

VARJAK PAW
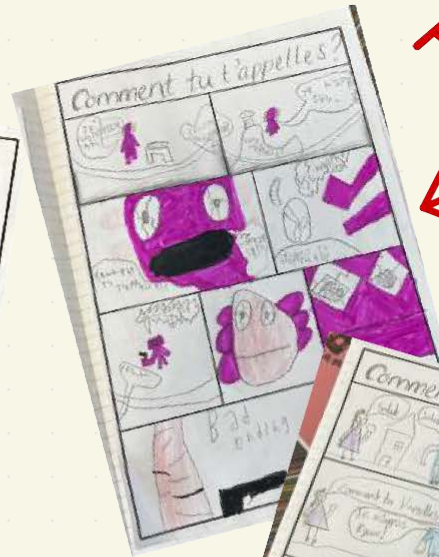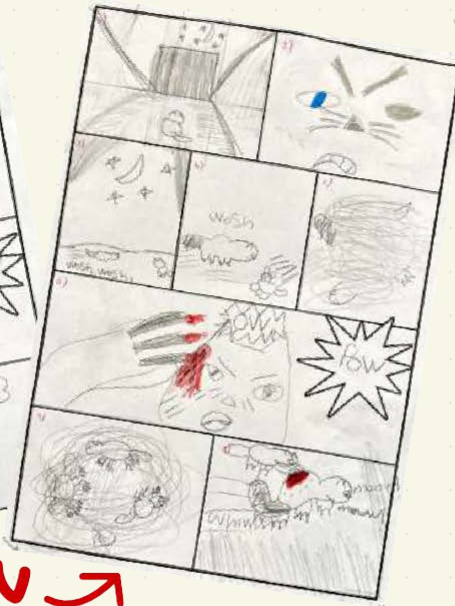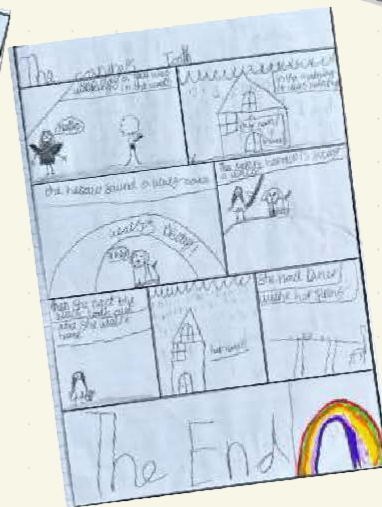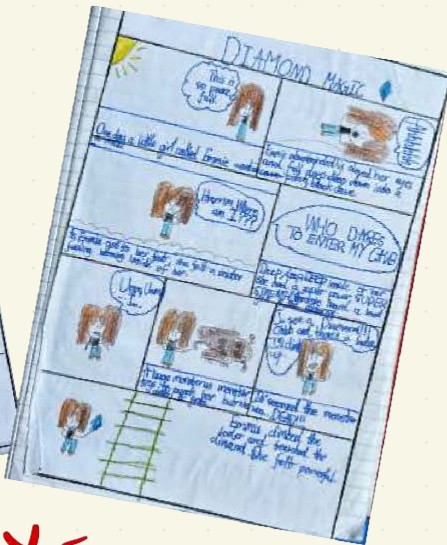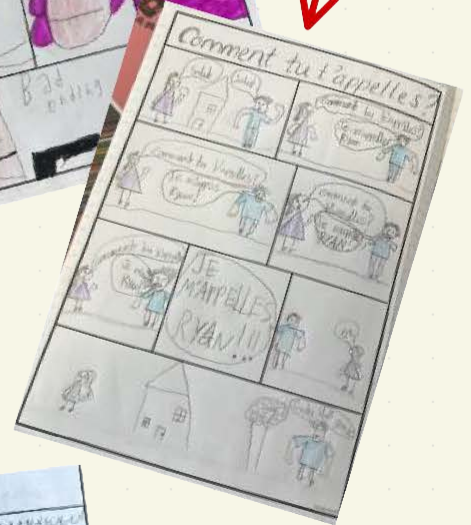
HARRY POTTER

GEOGRAPHY - THE WATER CYCLE
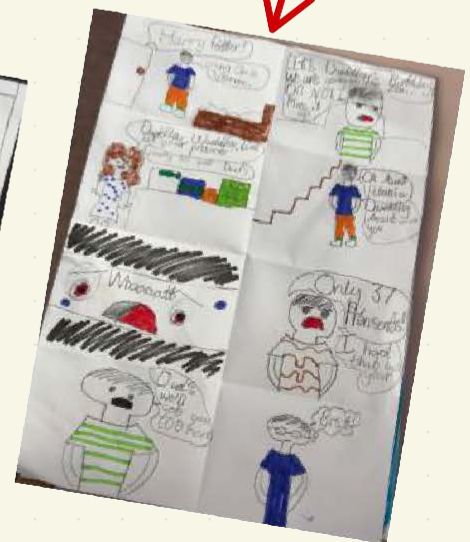
THANK YOU!

THAT'S A HUGE THANK YOU!

The Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Arts Council England

The Lakes International Comic Art Festival

The Phoenix Comic

The Staff And Pupils of...
Cambridge Primary School
George Hastwell School
Sandgate School
Vickerstown Primary School

Our Artists...
Alastair, Jim, Marc, Matt, Molly and Sabba

For further information...
hester.arteducation@gmail.com
simcomicartfestival@gmail.com

COMIC POTENTIAL

A COMICS AND LITERACY PROJECT

How far does engagement with comics positively affect children's enjoyment of reading and wellbeing?

A two-year project funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Appendix 2

Explanation of the data sets

Appendix 3

Budget

Appendix 2

Explanation of the data sets

There are four main data sets. Each has been designed to evaluate the success of the original Paul Hamlyn objectives. The methodology requires a brief explanation to put the outcomes in context and to evaluate what the data reveals.

Data set 1 Reading and Writing Levels against teacher expectation

This set asks each teacher in each of the four schools to estimate, using their knowledge of the student, where they expect the student to be at the end of the project. This uses the same metric of **expected, above and below expectation** that is required by the Department for Education in primary schools, so is familiar and routine for staff.

All we have asked is for staff to do is to estimate, **at the start of the project period**, where they think students will be **at the end of the project period** and to indicate, at the end of the project period, if their expectations have been met and therefore **"no change"**, have **exceeded their expectation** or performed **less well than their initial expectation.**

This should give us some relatively objective data about improvement of reading and writing during the period of the project.

Data set 2 8 Key Areas

This set aims to address key objectives from the project that are difficult to resolve into objective data. We therefore asked staff, again, to consider each of their pupils and all that they knew about them and make an assessment of them against the 8 key areas, taken from the objectives, at the start of the project period and then again at the end. This enabled us to see, in the opinion of their teacher, whether they had improved, stayed the same or declined against each area.

Data set 3 Student Surveys

We wanted to draw evidence from the students as well as their teachers. We used a survey that we had used on a previous and similar project. The students were asked a series of questions, around their reading behaviours, at the start of the project period and then asked the same questions at the end of the project period and we analysed the findings in terms of movement: increase, no change and decline.

Data set 4 Staff Survey

This was a terminal survey of teachers asking them to reflect on the project and its impact on their students' reading behaviours with particular reference to the application of the skills engaged with in the workshops across the wider curriculum and the perceived potential of these skills in a wider learning context.

Other methods of evaluation used but no data submitted

Each workshop was followed by a set of questions to: pupils, artist and staff. This helped me, as a researcher, identify areas to explore but did not present a data set in its own right.

Appendix 2

LICAF Data Report

School	Type
VT	Primary School
CT	Primary School
S	Special School
GH	Special School

Data set 1

Reading Levels against teacher expectation

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (18)	5	95	0
CT (29)	21	65	14
S (11)	73	27	0
GH(12)	67	25	8
Cohort (70)	33	57	10

Writing Levels against teacher expectation

School/cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (18)	0	100	0
CT (29)	17	69	14
S (11)	100	0	0
GH (12)*	25	0	0
Cohort (70)**	26(27)	56(67)	18(7)

*GH P-Levels re-calibrated in second year. Data therefore unreliable.
** In brackets discounting GH.

Data set 2

8 Key Areas*

*7 analysed

1. Attitude to reading

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	15	85	0
CT (30)	36	56	8
S (5)	40	60	0
GH(13)	61	39	0
Cohort (63)	35	62	3

2. Identifying as a reader

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	25	75	
CT (30)	28	56	16
S (5)	80	20	0
GH(13)	31	61	8
Cohort (63)	32	60	8

3. Motivation to read independently

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	10	90	0
CT (30)	56	36	8
S (5)	80	20	0
GH(13)	39	61	0
Cohort (63)	40	57	3

4. Willingness for and confidence in book talk

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	0	100	0
CT (30)	32	52	16
S (5)	40	60	0
GH(13)	15	77	8
Cohort (63)	19	73	8

5.   Creativity

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	15	85	
CT (30)	46	52	2
S (5)	40	60	0
GH(13)	46	54	0
Cohort (63)	33	63	4

6.   Wellbeing

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	0	100	0

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
CT (30)	33	62	5
S (5)	0	100	0
GH(13)	46	54	0
Cohort (63)	26	73	1

7.   Understanding history through use of comic protocols

School/Cohort	Higher than expected, %	As expected, %	Lower than expected, %
VT (20)	95	5	0
CT (30)	32	54	14
S (5)	20	80	0
GH(13)	46	54	0
Cohort (63)	55	40	5

Data set 3

Student Surveys

1. I read for fun at least once or twice a week

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	61	65
CS	57	80
S	60	53
GH	50	85
Cohort	56	70

2. I read things that I choose for myself at least once or twice a week

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	61	64
CS	70	80
S	60	80
GH	68	100
Cohort	67	76

3. If you read at home, you read for as long as possible

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	30	19
CS	38	28

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
S	0	15
GH	11	33
Cohort	31	23

4. You read comics/graphic novels at least once or twice a week

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	69	66
CS	56	91
S	40	44
GH	12.5	33
Cohort	45	68

5. I enjoy reading at least a little or a lot

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	76	70
CS	90	95
S	60	81
GH	77	100
Cohort	80	85

6. I agree a lot that reading is important

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	77	48
CS	85	87
S	80	100
GH	64	80
Cohort	76	77

7. I often or sometimes think about how to approach a task before I attempt it

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	75	84
CS	88	94
S	80	91
GH	56	71
Cohort	76	89

8. I often or sometimes think about how I approached a task once I have done it

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	99	79
CS	80	91
S	40	53
GH	43	57
Cohort	71	79

9. I agree a lot that I am happy/like myself

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	100	70
CS	75	83
S	100	91
GH	68	86
Cohort	81	82

10. I agree a lot that I usually do well in reading

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	62	61
CS	71	83
S	100	900
GH	53	100
Cohort	65	80

11. I agree a lot that I enjoy reading at home

School	Pre-activity %	End-Point %
VT	46	29
CS	71	60
S	0	18
GH	6	28
Cohort	40	38

11. I agree a lot that I enjoy reading a book

School	Pre-activity %		End-Point %
VT	54		45
CS	80		86
S	40		50
GH	25		29
Cohort	54		61

Data set 4

Staff Survey

1. **Have you deliberately used the comic format for any teaching in other curriculum areas?**
- Yes: 100%

In which "other curriculum areas" have you used the comic format?

- Writing
- Re-telling a religious story
- As revisit activities in : science, geography, English and history
- PSHE (Personal Social Health Economic Education)

2. **Have you noticed any pupils using comic features or engaging with comics or the comic format independently, e.g. in other lessons without being asked to use them?**
- Yes: 60%
- No: 40%

When have you noticed pupils using comic features etc in other lessons?

- During free choice reading time
- Some pupils making their own comics in their own time

3. **Do you think that what pupils have learned about comics has transferred into other subjects?**
- Yes: 60%
- No: 40%

Give instances of when pupils have evidenced skills learnt in the comic workshops in other curriculum areas

- I think they see it as a fun way to display information they are learning
- They find using a comic format an easy way of showing a process, story or series of events
- Into art where they want to create their own comics

4. **Have you noticed a significant improvement in a significant number of students in their motivation to read?**
- Yes: 20%
- No: 80%

5. **Have you noticed a significant improvement in a significant number of students in their skills to support storytelling, writing and drawing?**
- Yes: 60% No: 40%

6. **Have you noticed a significant improvement in a significant number of students in their confidence and wellbeing through techniques for self-expression?**
- Yes: 50%
- No: 50%

7. **Has the work with COMPOT (Comic Potential, our group name) in the past two years improved student readiness for the next key stage?**
- Yes: 40%
- No: 60%

8. **Do you think that your school management recognise the potential of using comics to create a more expressive and creative culture in your school that can be sustained?**
- Yes: 100%

Appendix 3

BUDGET

EXPENDITURE Activity	Projected Total	Actual Total	Notes
Attendance at LICAF '22 for four schools on Friday 14 October to engage in workshops and visit exhibitions plus in 2023	7,200	7,200	
Immersion Day in Barrow location	4,000	2,500	Delivering second round of primary immersion days in school reduced travel costs. Also able to use school resources
CPD sessions/ twilight training sessions with four schools involving all school body	1,500	1,500	
Online training sessions for participating artists	2,400	2,000	Second round delivered online, reducing travel costs
One day workshops within four schools – Barrow & Kendal	18,400	15,400	Less costs incurred by using artists close to Barrow and Kendal
Research & evaluation	18,000	18,000	
Digital teacher resources	8,000	9,500	Higher costs for postproduction
School library	2,500	3,000	
Phoenix Comics	3,000	3,000	
Admin, accounting and management of project	26,000	26,700	
Project production team	29,800	32,000	Higher travel costs for team to attend sessions
Project exhibition/ anthology	5,300	5,300	
	£126,100	**£126,100**	

INCOME Activity	Projected Total	Actual Total	Notes
LICAF admin, accounting and management of project	14,000	14,000	In kind support from LICAF resources
End of project exhibition at LICAF '24	2,000	2,000	In kind support from LICAF via Windows Trail programme
Sponsorship of anthology	1,500	1,500	In kind support from LICAF resources
Sponsorship of comics for school libraries	1,500	1,500	In kind support from LICAF, Pheonix Comics, publishers
LICAF	**Total**	**£19,000**	
Paul Hamlyn Foundation Grant	**Total**	**£107,100**	
	Total	**£126,100**	