



***Bringing Children's Books Alive***

[www.citystorieshere.com](http://www.citystorieshere.com)

## **City Stories guide to success**

### **Our recipe for children to love books**

The City Stories project is a complete spectrum of activities and events

***A unique and long term project for everyone to be a reader.***

- Raising the profile of children's books
- Inspiring creativity
- Website, book reviews and book groups
- Authors, illustrators, publishers and you!

City Stories

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## City Stories Concept - Bringing Children's Books Alive

There is no better way for any child to explore the world and themselves than through reading.

City Stories ensures that all children have the chance to find a way into books that will give them a life long love of reading.

It's a whole programme about books and activities with full participation by the children. A day with authors and workshops is the culmination but not the end of the project.

The event gives additionality to the literacy curriculum.

### Aims:

- Bringing 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
- Raising attainment and aspiration

### Objectives:

- To inspire children about books and reading
- To introduce children to authors and illustrators
- To provide books to children and their families
- To enable on line reviews and information through the dedicated CityStories website
- To provide the school with a planned programme of ideas

### Project delivers:

- Free books for children
- Authors, well known and dynamic
- Half term of work and resources
- One day of workshops and meeting with authors
- Interactive web site, with children's book reviews
- Development of a book group
- Continued support

*Our project is unique, it is long lasting and creates readers of a new generation.*

*A breath of fresh air to the enjoyment of reading*



## How it works....

We work with you and the children on the project. The planning ahead, the authors and the website and book group development are all part of the package.

The start of the project begins with the planning, working with the children and leaders, making sure we get it right. This is usually about a month or 6 weeks ahead of an actual event.

The event is a whole day of fun and activities with authors and illustrators, forums, workshops, book signing, question and answer sessions and, of course there's always lunch!

But the longer lasting benefit in City Stories is in ensuring that this is not just a single event.

It is a life long learning process.

In the next 2 weeks we are back at the school or library with the children. We have time to sit and listen, to talk through what really motivates the children and hear from them the excitement and inspiration about the books they have just read and authors they have just met.

And still the work continues..... at that session after the event we start getting the book reviews to a point when they can go on to the web site. We look extensively at the newly set up web site and hear the children's thoughts! On that day also we collect evaluations and the interest shown in setting up a book group.

After that..... we work with the Federation of Children's Book Groups and the Local Authority Extended Services team in establishing a Book Group. This can take many forms. Currently, we are looking at an finding the best way to establish an After School Group with Extended Services support.



*CityStories projects mean that reading is not a 'One Off Event' – It's for life!*

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## 1. Thinking Ahead ( Pre Event Planning)

Time for thinking ahead and planning exactly how the project will take shape. We usually meet, at least a month before to deliver some books, suggest work and give information, set up the website and establish contacts so we can be in touch whenever needed. This continues to, and beyond the event. Listed below are a number of things we do that are always part of the project, sometimes there are more.

- Deliver the books that are given to the children. These are books of the authors, who the children will meet and work with at the event. The books are for children to read and keep. Many of the children we work with do not have their own books at home.
- Create a website, specifically for the project, and within CityStories. This will then contain all the information about the event, have interactive links with other relevant organisations, space for book reviews from the children and loads of information.
- Provide resources, such as suggested work around the authors and their books, lists of questions to ask, provide information about the authors. Work with teachers and leaders.
- Provide all the marketing materials, including our Big Bookmarks, cards and posters
- Plan and write a press release
- Invite members of the local community, councillors and local authority officials to the event.
- Make contact with the local library
- Organise venue arrangements
- Plan the lunch!

## 2. The Event

The main focus of the project and the time when there is a real buzz. All the work ahead of the event means that the children are really excited and for them this is a brilliant day. It means a huge amount. For the children we work with, they become special, they are with a celebrity type person and this is hugely important in raising their self esteem.

It is a whole day immersed in books! The day is designed so that all the children need to bring is their book and imaginations.

- Meet with the authors and have time for some questions
- Workshops with groups of between 10 – 15 children and one author or illustrator
- Break for lunch and time for personal book signing
- Space to meet informally
- Workshops continue
- Forum and more time for questions
- Families invited to the last session
- Bags with books, writers packs and plenty of material to start reading.
- More book signing before going home



### 3. After the event....

*Actually, this is just the beginning!*

Its hard to know when the actual project moves into the work in the future. But some of the activities we do to make sure that children are helped as they continue reading are:

- Return to the school about a week after the event and work with the children directly on their thoughts of the day, the books they have received and the authors they met.
- Work with the children on writing their reviews directly on computers so they can be put on to the website. This has an amazing effect and the work is often very creative.
- Help them to find more books they would like to read, either by the author or books that are similar.
- Work with the Federation of Children's Book Groups to set up a Book Group or After School Group.
- Produce a report of the event and evaluation
- Link to the school development plan, where appropriate. This has the added value of making the event part of the literacy curriculum and makes the project visible in the school planning and reporting.



*'I would like to write my own story today.'* Ibrahim, aged 9 years, *LeytonStories2*



## **Authors and Illustrators ....**

The authors and illustrators we work with, not only write good books but are excellent at working with children.

They enjoy, as much as we do, working directly with children and seeing the inspiration and buzz that they feel about books and stories.

As a team the enthusiasm is catching and leads the way in motivating and inspiring the children to read and use their imaginations to develop their own stories.

The following authors and illustrators have all worked with CityStories, and used their books in the projects.

### **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.

### **Bernard Ashley , author of Angel Boy**

Bernard has written 19 books for children, including *Angel Boy*, *Little Soldier*, *A Kind of Wild Justice* and *Dinner Ladies Don't Count*, plus many more. He started his career as a teacher and head teacher before taking up writing for children as his main career.

### **Ifeoma Onyefulu, author of One Big Family**

Ifeoma is a children's author, writer and photographer. Her books for children reflect life in Africa, full of colour and vibrancy. Originally from Nigeria she now lives in North London. Her books include *Chidi Only Likes Blue*, *Ebele's Favourite* and many more.

### **Pauline Stewart, author of Singing Down the Breadfruit**

Pauline is an accomplished writer and also writes plays, novels as well as poetry. Born in Hackney, her parents were from Jamaica and she now lives in Ilford.

### **Jane Clarke, author of Dippy's Sleepover**

Children's author and specialist in delivering workshops to both children and adults in education.

**Amaofi Kwapong** , storyteller and educationalist, delivering fascinating insights into learning and cultural difference.

**Mike Spoor**, artist and ceramicist, delivering practical art workshops and insights into creativity for children of all ages.

**Clare Beaton**, children's author and specialist in craft and activities with children. Fun workshops raising awareness of texture, colour and imagination



## Bags of Books.....

At the start of the project, all the children receive a book.

This is a book of their own, to read and to have.

It may start their own collection of books, who knows! It is their own for keeps!. Its difficult to quantify the meaning of this to many children. And even harder to comprehend a world or a home, where there are no books. But this can be the reality.

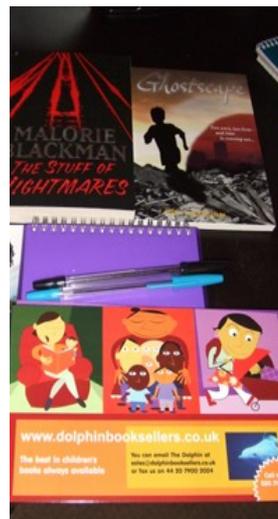
At the event, each child is given a bag of books and plenty of materials to start writing or to find out more about books. Most events have three authors and the children receive a book from each author.

We make sure that all the books are just right for the children at the event. From our discussions with teachers and librarians, and an understanding of the community, we can find books that will enthuse, fire imaginations, broaden horizons and encourage a love of reading.

It is important to us that every child enjoys their books. They are not only suitable for the age of the children but are right for their own reading stage and can reflect a world wide community.

We find books that speak to children; these can include the whole genre of novels, poetry, information books, adventure books and so on. We also find books that are dual language and books that are written in style and print that can aid reading.

We work directly with a small group of publishers who are able to provide books and support for the project.



During the event all the children and staff too have the opportunity to have their books individually signed. They meet with the authors and have a personal message in their book. This is a huge builder of self esteem. Children and staff love it!

*The books are seen as a trigger for inspiring work and to bring conversations alive*

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## Project Website and Children's Involvement

Right from the start the projects have their own website. These have links with current organisation websites and national initiatives, such as Reading For Life and the National Literacy Trust.

We use it to ensure that all the information is readily available and easily accessible.

Our partnership team also develops websites for schools, children's centres and community organisations, so we are very able to create, design and build City Stories project websites.

And for children and young people, being able to see information on line, is part of their world.

They use IT as part of their own learning and exploration environments, so the project website means a great deal to them. Children are involved right through the project and participate fully in all areas of the design, planning and future.

There are also many benefits that our partnership can bring to the design and integrated working technology, which will greatly enhance the project. It will enable families at home and the wider family network to be involved in the books, fun and learning.

All the websites can have a translation facility, whereby the text is easily translated into one of 34 different languages. This means that community access in areas of diversity is enabled and all families are able to read the text in their own language.

This includes all the information that is held on the website, including children's book reviews and any newsletters or information about the project.

Once the event has happened and the project continues into the book group, the website is always there for the children and the groups to add loads of information. There can be space for favourite book titles, future events, email contacts and any number of links to favourite sites.

Our websites and services are secure, regularly backed up using strong encryption, with our team dedicated to using Open Source solutions, wherever we can.

### Children's Involvement

We are passionate about involving children in the CityStories projects. From the start we work with the children on how best to plan the event and the kind of books that they would be interested in reading.

Our partnership has a background in participation programmes with children and young people and we use this expertise to successfully develop the project and ensure that all the participants feel a sense of identity and ownership.



Supporting a children's book group in your community

[www.leytonstories.org.uk](http://www.leytonstories.org.uk)

*Project websites are accessed across the world – supporting and creating contact*

[www.citystorieshere.com](http://www.citystorieshere.com)



## Dolphin Booksellers

Dolphin Booksellers started as a result of our deep interest and passion about children's books. We aim to create opportunities for reading and encouraging the value of literacy.

There are many excellent ideas and resources to promote literacy, to gain access to books and to involve families and communities.

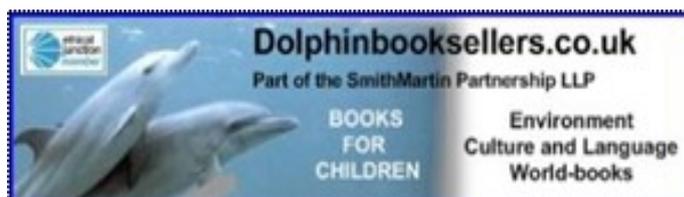
The website [www.dolphinbooksellers.co.uk](http://www.dolphinbooksellers.co.uk) has lots of information about children's books, authors, illustrators and publishers. The latest news is always on line.

The information links take you to more and more events and ideas both in the UK and abroad.

The Dolphin Bookblog is a regular feature with updates about interests, activities, competitions and just good for reading a snapshot about children's books.

And of course , you can also buy books through the website. We link into Amazon, so you can guarantee that the best prices are available for you. From our news and information on Dolphin Booksellers, you can use this as a guide for buying books.

We think you get the best of both worlds; information and guides about what to buy, a huge range of books available at the click of the mouse and at a good price.



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## Contact SmithMartin Partnership LLP

We are happy to develop projects and settings across the UK, Europe and United States.

For London and the South East you can contact our London office below:

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You can see our partnership on the following web sites...

[www.smithmartinpartnership.com](http://www.smithmartinpartnership.com)

[www.dolphinbooksellers.co.uk](http://www.dolphinbooksellers.co.uk)

[www.thirdsectorweb.co.uk](http://www.thirdsectorweb.co.uk)

[www.dolphinbookbox.co.uk](http://www.dolphinbookbox.co.uk)

If we can help, let us know, we are happy to offer advice, bid support or design input.

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