

Spread The Word

The *Spread The Word* project sees us visiting Special Schools that haven't previously had any connection to Bag Books and running a full day of storytelling with one of our storytellers.



As a result of this project we've increased the percentage of UK Special Schools reached by Bag Books from 65% to 76% over the past year. Feedback has generally been excellent, with many great comments coming our way including this from Parkside School in Norfolk:

"The whole experience was very good and there was great interaction with the children; it was very stimulating. There was excellent interaction both verbally and with props/resources. We were very impressed; it really got the children excited about stories and the level of pupil engagement was brilliant. They really enjoyed the stories and were able to "get lost" within the stories. Three new children who are generally quiet became very animated and verbal with the multi-sensory approach - excellent."

Storyline is published three times a year and is available in email and print versions. If you would like to change the format you receive in future please contact us. Similarly, please let us know if you'd rather not receive future editions.



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Children's Hospitals

Bag Books is delighted to have secured funding to enable us to host multi-sensory storytelling sessions at five London hospital schools.

Hospital schools provide education for children and young people aged 4 to 18, while they are in hospital. They also provide places for students who cannot access mainstream school due to their medical conditions. Hospital schools ensure that children and young people have their rights to education preserved whilst in hospital.

The majority of children with Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities (PMLD) also have severe physical disabilities; over 90% have mobility problems, 70% have epilepsy, 65% have hearing problems and over 30% have breathing problems. Many also require tube feeding. This means that hospital stays, often long-term, are frequent for children with PMLD. As with all sick children, it is important that as far as possible, elements of normal routine are maintained and this includes schooling.

To date, Bag Books has visited the Evelina Children's Hospital, Great Ormond Street Children's Hospital and the Royal Free Children's Hospital. Each day has been totally different but all equally rewarding. The feedback from the participating hospital schools has been extremely positive and we hope to secure additional funding to enable us to visit all UK hospital schools in the future.

Storyline

April 2012

Multi-sensory stories for people with learning disabilities



Lost in London

The launch for our newest story definitely scaled new heights when *Lost In London*, was told as part of a storytelling session on the London Eye with pupils from Cherry Garden School.



Lost In London is the story of a couple looking for their dog who has run off and got lost. The story, which actually features the London Eye, also takes in Buckingham Palace, Hyde Park and Big Ben, as well as including an Oyster Card for users to swipe for a bus ride.

We would like to thank the people at the London Eye for their support on the day, and for providing us with free tickets and a £1,000 donation.



Radio 4 Appeal

We are delighted to announce that Bag Books has been selected to benefit from a BBC Radio 4 Appeal. The appeal will be hosted by former Paralympian and Bag Books supporter Baroness Tanni-Grey Thompson. Tanni has previously attended a Bag Books multi-sensory storytelling session and even read one of our books to a group of children. She will draw on this experience when talking about Bag Books and will describe pages from one of our newer books, *The Fairground*.



Please tune into the appeal on **Sunday 6th May** at 07.55 or 21.26. It will also be repeated on Thursday 10th May at 15.27. You will also be able to listen to it after 6th May at www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/appeal. Please tell your friends, family, colleagues etc and help us spread the word via Facebook and Twitter if you're signed up. We have been lucky enough to benefit from two appeals in the past, both raising over £10,000. With your help, we can exceed that target making this our most successful appeal yet. Full details about how you can donate will be read out after the appeal and will also feature on the website.

Many thanks to Tanni for hosting the appeal and for her continued support of our work.

The Queen's Visit...

Over the last few months, three London schools have taken part in our new Build-a-Book project with two more to follow before the end of the school year.

The Build-a-Book project is funded by The Santander Foundation and involves hosting craft days within special schools for groups of children with a range of different learning disabilities. The children get the chance to participate in various activities that they wouldn't normally have the opportunity to do such as sawing wood, hammering nails, melting wax, and even recording a sound for the security check scanner.



The end result is the creation of a bespoke Bag Book for their school. The book is called *The Queen's Visit* and is about the Queen coming to visit the school, and the rush to get everything ready for her arrival. At the end of the session the pupils are told the story using their own copy, which they then get to keep for ongoing use in the school.



Bag Books strongly believes in creating a culture of inclusion of youngsters with learning disabilities, enabling them to participate in mainstream activities. This project encourages that and also provides a rewarding and fun activity. The children learn new skills and use unfamiliar equipment and materials. By creating something for ongoing use in the school for themselves and their peers, it also gives the children a sense of empowerment and ownership. We hope to secure additional funding to enable us to continue with this project.

...and a visit to The Queen

By coincidence, our Chief Executive, Dean Casswell, was invited to meet HM The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at a Reception in Buckingham Palace. Dean said *"It's wonderful that the work of Bag Books has been recognised in this way."*



The Telling Tales legacy

The Telling Tales project offered library staff mentoring from one of our storytellers as they honed their multi-sensory storytelling skills over the course of six sessions. The two-year project, funded by the Big Lottery Fund, finished last summer and trained 296 librarians in 127 libraries with the aim of giving them the confidence and knowledge to continue multi-sensory storytelling on their own. Claire Morley of Crowborough Library in East Sussex was one of the trainees on the project, and when we contacted her to see how things were going we were thrilled to hear of her work.



Claire runs regular storytelling sessions at the library and also runs sessions at three local adult care homes. Every term, Claire also runs storytelling at Grove Park School, the school she worked with on Telling Tales. The library service have purchased a large number of Bag Books which are available for anyone to borrow, subject to a short training session with Claire or one of her colleagues. Claire has also done a few home visits to demonstrate the stories. Because of all the work Claire has been doing, the library has been nominated for a *Libraries Change Lives Award*.

It's always great to see people carrying on our work, and we'd love to share more success stories. If you'd like to tell us what you've been doing, please email stuart@bagbooks.org

2011 in figures

Storytelling

- 4,885 people with learning disabilities attended one of our storytelling sessions. That's an increase of 20% on 2010 and the largest number we've ever had.

Training

- During the year we trained 642 people.
- A new training pack, consisting of a DVD and a 16 page booklet, was launched early in the year and 99 copies were distributed.

Book production

- We made 1,141 books, a 22% increase on 2010.
- Five new "classic" design books were launched: *The Fairground*, *What Am I?*, *Zubair's Eid*, *The Christmas Story* and *Aladdin*. Our new Bag Books "At Home" product aimed at parents and carers was launched in November.

Our reach

- Through our books and storytelling we have now reached 76% of all the Special Schools in the UK catering for pupils with Severe or Profound & Multiple Learning Disabilities.
- In a survey of Special Needs Teachers, 86% said they used multi-sensory books at least weekly including 36% who said daily.
- In total, we estimate that we reached at least 18,000 people with stories during the year.
- The number of websites linking to ours was 2,160 compared with 590 a year ago.

Finances

- In common with many other charities, 2011 was a very difficult year financially. Income fell by 15% and this forced us to cut back on expenditure but we hope to have a more encouraging 2012.