### Establishment name: St Mary's R.C. Primary Chipping

**Lancashire no.** 06/065  
**Contact name:** Chris Stringer  
**Email:** head@st-marys-chipping.lancs.sch.uk  
**Telephone no.** 01995 61367  
**Award granted:** Innovative Practice  
**Project title:** "Amongst The Fells" Storytelling Festival

### Project summary

In order to develop our project-based learning approach at St Mary's school I suggested a Storytelling Festival be held in 2008 which would be run by the children. Its success led to it becoming an annual event for the village. The children were given ownership of the project so that their sense of responsibility would impact upon outcome.

The whole community is involved, from the nursery to local businesses and voluntary groups.

The children choose a theme for the Festival; storytelling revolves around that theme e.g. "Myths, Magic and Minotaurs". The children not only organise the event but are largely the storytellers too.

Organisation of the event includes the children researching suitable venues for storytelling sessions, investigating Health & Safety, approaching businesses for financial support, employing the services of professional storytellers, crafts people and musicians and arranging catering facilities. Pupils identified a need for and organised workshops on storytelling skills for parents.

### Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

An innovative project which the children would be given ownership of.

### Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- [ ] Be healthy  
- [ ] Stay Safe  
- [x] Enjoy and achieve  
- [ ] Make a positive contribution  
- [x] Achieve economic well-being

### What were you hoping to achieve?

To allow further development of our project-based learning approach, with an emphasis on development of entrepreneurial skills in particular, to link in with raising pupils' awareness of the importance of future economic well being. Specific desired outcomes included the ability to conduct effective research independently;
to be able to take responsibility for one’s own learning; to enjoy and value the oral story tradition; to tailor performances to specific audiences.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

Great interest in a Fairtrade project revealed a desire by the children to run their own business; we had established a Fairtrade business which has run successfully in school for some years now; the children wanted to try out their skills in another area. I felt that a venture which focused upon storytelling would meet their needs, plus give a much needed boost to oracy skills in school.

Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school?

Currently 29 pupils on roll; socio-economic background is higher than the average for Lancashire; 20% SEN pupils.

What did you do?

In February 2008 I suggested the idea of a Storytelling Festival to pupils. They discussed with me over a period of two weeks how they might get the venture off the ground. In April they started to plan the Festival in detail. The first event took place on July 12th 2008. It was repeated in July 2009.

Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?

The pupils established working teams who were responsible for areas including advertising, revenue, catering, booking of musicians and crafts people, costume making, choice of suitable literature, timetabling of sessions. Parents, family, governors and staff were all allocated roles by the children e.g. one T.A. was asked to be wardrobe mistress.

How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?

After each event feedback was obtained from community, children, businesses. Comments from the feedback were analysed by the pupils who then used this to improve upon the next event.

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

Timings for sessions have been altered to allow visitors to be entertained by more sessions. Performances were evaluated and some professionals identified as being poor value for money and hence not invited back. More substantial refreshments available following feedback from visitors who wanted to make a day of it but were hungry!

What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

The pupils' confidence has increased enormously; they will now stand up in front of a large [100+] audience and tell a story or give a presentation. Oral skills in lessons are much improved as are presentational skills across the board. The planning and delivery of workshops by the children allowed them to become the educators; this has impacted in class because our children now take on the role of educator to
other children and adults with confidence. Further workshops - e.g. teaching German to parents and Governors - have since taken place.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

- To secure reliable sources of income - e.g. grants - to fund the project; the children will research this.
- To put the Festival firmly on the literary map by giving talks about the Festival and advertising more widely.
- To possibly work in conjunction with the National Association of Storytellers - a link has already been made.

**What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?**

Entrust the children with the project; having ownership of the Festival definitely impacted upon their performance and progress throughout. Staff were still able to scaffold learning and direct as necessary. Time management needs to be a priority for staff - we have to ensure that the project continually provides worthwhile learning opportunities for the pupils without becoming a repetitive exercise each year.

**Any other comments:**

Our village needed an event like this to provide the community with a day to enjoy and celebrate what is good together. The village is literally "buzzing" all day, and the streets are awash with people dressed up as characters from stories. There is a real festival feel to it.