**Establishment name:** St Mary & St Benedict’s RC Primary School  
**Lancashire no.:** 07/014  
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**Award granted:** Innovative Practice  
**Project title:** ‘SMSB -The Works! Using Economic and Work Related Learning to Promote Writing’

### Project summary

**SMSB** The Works!’ was originally devised as a schoolwide response to the ECM agenda, underachievement in writing and pupil comment.

We decided that we would set up a business park across the school (The Works!). Each class would form a business, with its own management structure, and each business would design and create a recycled product to market and sell.

As a stimulus, staff went behind the scenes at Marks & Spencers, with expert input from Global Renewable on recycling etc.

Stimuli for the children included trips out to look at textile and weaving mills plus visits to Garden Centres/ Smoothie bars etc. Visitors to school included parental consultants and business partners.

Several successful businesses were formed with children genuinely organising and running them: Including:

- **Foundation Stage:** The RAR Bar!
- **Year 1/2** B.F.B.H (Bird Feeders Bird Houses)  
- **Year 3/4** The Re-usinators  
- **Year 5** Class Cloth  
- **Year 6** S.O.R. T. (School Organising Re-used Textiles)

Each business generated prototype products and presented their 'pitches' to a Dragon's Den panel comprising partners including the Chair of Booths, LEA representatives, EBP, UCLAN, Parental Consultants etc. The best prototypes were then chosen by the Dragons.

Impact: Huge impact on lots of fronts including: parental and wider community involvement, enthusiasm and enjoyment from ALL stakeholders, fantastic vehicle
for providing real life problem solving situations and opportunities to write for a genuine purpose.

**Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?**

Using an innovative approach to promote writing and to promote economic understanding.

**Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:**

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

**What were you hoping to achieve?**

To train pupils in aspects of Economics and provide a real life vehicle for contextualising discrete curriculum areas

"In order for children to achieve Economic Well Being (ECM) Economic Understanding (EU) needs developing throughout school (SEF). This should provide an excellent vehicle for teaching writing, as children will be required to write for a variety of REAL purposes including; application forms, letters, note taking etc" SDP

"To raise levels of attainment in writing across school but particularly in Boys writing"

**How did you identify the need for this practice?**

- Year 6 pupil suggested we weren't 'green' enough as a school!
- Year 6 SATs suggest that we are well below NA for writing, particularly in Boys Writing.
- ECM Audit also suggested Achieving Economic Well Being was an area for development
- Last year's project for More Able Children (MAP Movie Makers) achieved two objectives, which were to; produce a Kid's Guide DVD and to provide a vehicle for children to organise themselves using a business mode. However, the project generated some dissatisfaction amongst parents of children not involved (i.e. some parents were unhappy that their children had not been 'selected' for this 'exciting project', despite our explanations that the 10% is a government edict!)
  
We therefore promised that we would 'roll out' the business idea across the school, so the project was developed.

**What did you do?**

- Held a staff meeting to discuss 'gaps' in our provision for ECM
- INSET / Stimulus Day planned for staff in October -visit to Marks & Spencers behind the scenes, plus input on Economic Understanding from HT
- Staff also looked at learning styles and De Bono's Thinking Hats as well as planning a hypothetical business using a 'logiblock' approach

Key Assemblies including:
• What's My Line? Where females doing traditionally male roles (vice versa) mimed their roles and asked children to guess what they did promoting discussion on stereotyping by appearance and traditional roles in society. Fascinating - particularly the female pilot who they thought was a waitress and the male childminder who couldn't do that role 'because that's what women do'(!)

• Staff met with 'Global Renewables' and LEA Officials to discuss how we could promote aspects of recycling through the project and teach children how to be more eco-friendly.

• Members of Global Renewables came into school to do an assembly about recycling and follow-up workshops in classes

• Barriers to change were logistics! Year 6 staff were understandably anxious about SATs preparation - their involvement reduced to one afternoon per week after the initial 3 week whole school approach.

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

• Skills & Social Inclusion - Lancashire County Developments Ltd - support - possible case study for innovative practice - contact Andrew Swarbrick

• Global Renewables -Consultants for background workshops in Recycling etc

• Pat Jefferson -What's My Line Assembly (WMLA) to challenge children's stereotypes.

• Graham Dunn - Dragon for Dragon's Den.

• Edwin Booth Chair of Booths Supermarkets - Dragon & Business Partner

• Stuart Lockhart (parent) - Manager Halls Preston - Dragon & Consultant/BP

• Paula Babarawicz (parent) Manager Marks & Spencers - Dragon & BP

• Gillian Beeley CEO Education Business Partnership - BP (WMLA) PLUS female RAF Pilot, male childminder etc (WMLA)!

• UCLAN - Dragon's Den -will be using school as case study

• All parents in school -Bring Your parent to 'Work' Day - Opportunity for parents to see the Business Park in Action

• BBC Working Lunch set up a filming slot then pulled out when a better story came up on the day!

How has the practice been modified or improved during development?

The most encouraging aspect of the project from a Leadership angle was, that during enforced sick leave for 2 weeks, when the Head was absent, the whole project continued with the same amount of energy and enthusiasm and yet MORE innovation and development, including Dragon's Den (key) phase of the project. This was particularly encouraging, as this was a comparatively new approach to working, both organisationally and in content.

We devised an in-house planning sheet for the Works, which we cross-referenced with National Curriculum

We found most activities took longer than first anticipated because children were solving real problems and discussing the best methods to do so
**What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?**

- We circulated our annual parental questionnaire at the end of half term, and one of the questions was about The Works. The response was overwhelmingly positive and we had many unsolicited letters and emails from parents/ LEA Officials/ Business partners etc. congratulating the children and staff on the project.
- Scrutiny of pupils work reveals that children are far more motivated to write when they have learned experientially! Quality and quantity of work was far greater than usual approaches to curriculum.
- Learning logs from children reveal that they relished the independence and genuine decision making which is a natural component of this approach.
- Presentations to the Dragons AND to parents on "Bring Your Parent to Work Day", demonstrated high levels of confidence from children who are normally unwilling to speak in front of peers.

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

- Children are currently marketing their products and producing Big Books as a resource for other staff / schools to use.
- Sales teams from each company will liaise with Spar and M&S, who may stock and sell their products
- The whole project will be evaluated at Easter.

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

- All staff must be convinced of the merits of this approach prior to starting!
- Liaison with Business Partners needs to be set up prior to start
- Children must be given GENUINE control over their businesses with staff playing a facilitating role

**Any Other Comments:**

This project has exceeded our expectations and been highly successful and enjoyable!