

From One to Five

Implementation report on Story Museum Storyteller in Residence

January – September 2006

My favourite moment in the whole project was during the evaluation of the school residency. As we recollected each activity there was one boy who gave every activity the lowest score. *Boring...didn't like it ...couldn't do it ...* All of his memories seemed to be of boredom and failure. But then he recalled the stepping stones game and remembered how he had single-handedly recollected and retold the whole of Hansel and Gretel to his class. His face opened into the broadest, sweetest grin – *Yes. That was great!* – And he held up five fingers to show how much he had enjoyed it.

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Story Museum School Story Service
September 2006

Summary

This report describes the implementation and evaluation of the project “Story Museum Storyteller in Residence”, implemented between January and September 2006. The overall rationale for the project was to help develop a clearer strategy for the School Story Service (SSS) section of the Story Museum by:

- Conducting a residency in a school in a disadvantaged area to learn about children’s preferences for stories and learning about stories.
- Conducting a trial of a Storyday in 15 schools around the county, in order to test, develop and refine a model for future work of the SSS.
- Allocating time for visiting similar institutions to observe ways of working and exchange lessons learned.
- Allocate time for discussing and reflecting with the Story Museum team leading to the creation of a SSS draft strategic plan for the coming three years.

Residency

The residency project (section two) was implemented in Wood Farm School on an Oxford City estate, working with year 2 and year 6 classes (aged 6 /7 and 10/11). The project revolved around each child creating a story scrapbook of their favourite stories and things about story. The workshops themselves consisted of a mixture of storytelling, speaking, listening, drama, art and creative writing, leading to creations for the scrapbook every week. This resulted in a wealth of information about preferred story types for both age groups. At the end of the residency both classes were asked to vote on how much they enjoyed the various activities, providing a data set on preferred learning styles in relation to story. Detailed feedback was also received from one of the teachers on the approaches used, its value and suggestions for future work of the Story Museum.

Some key findings included:

- Fear of failure as common reason for not enjoying writing or drawing.
- Wish for autonomy and freedom in the classroom (year 6).
- Passionate love of favourite characters.
- Favourite TV and movie stories often from ‘adult’ genres (year 6).
- Prevalence of stories about crime, violence and tragedy in relation to the community environment, coupled with excitement and interest in urban legends (year 6).
- Passionate love of storytelling.
- Enjoyment of various ‘games’ (speaking, listening, enacting and imagining exercises), with a diverse range of favourites within and between classes.
- Teachers wish to upgrade storytelling skills.

Storyday pilot

The storyday pilot (section three) was designed to inspire engagement, enjoyment and enthusiasm for a story, as a platform for further follow up teaching activities around the story. In this case we used an Iraqi wondertale called The Tree of Life and combined it with information about Iraq and its main religion (Islam).

Each storyday involved a 1-1.25 hr performance of story and music followed by visiting a 'narrative walk' exhibition which retold the story using text, pictures, sounds, music, scents and interactive activities of various kinds. Classes visited the exhibition for a minimum of half an hour and teachers were offered a series of activity boxes containing materials for follow up work that day (puppets, hats, wigs and masks for role play, Arab drums for percussion lessons, and Arab headscarves to practice headscarf tying). In addition 20 suggestions were circulated in advance for other ways of working with the story after the visit.

The storydays were evaluated through:

- Debrief interviews with classes (total data for 901 students)
- Debrief questionnaire with teachers (29)
- Feedback from 5 expert observers who each witnessed one or more storydays (two educationalists, one creative writing specialist, one museum director and one leading storyteller).

We also documented 3 specific cases of follow up:

- One school which planned three solid weeks of literacy around the story.
- One school which created its own story museum exhibition around the book *The Iron Man*.
- The County Council Family Literacy Programme trialled a successful course for parents with basic literacy skills, using the Storyday as a focus.

In broad terms, we discovered that;

- Our combination of performance and objects appears to be unique and to stimulate new ways of working in schools
- Feedback from teachers, pupils and evaluators was overwhelmingly positive, confirming high levels of engagement and enjoyment and a strong platform for follow up teaching.
- That if we can help children to feel comfortable, playful and confident to experiment they can be very receptive and imaginative, sometimes surprising themselves and their teachers.
- That it is possible for even the most restless children to enjoy a one-hour storytelling, also a source of surprise to both children and teachers .
- That exhibitions don't need virtual or high tech features to be interactive: real things to see, smell, touch, hear and master in different ways are absorbing and stimulating.
- Schools would like to book visits from us every year, a year or two ahead, and build classroom work around them.
- Storydays are good value and convenient for schools – often cheaper than the cost of a coach for an outing, and simpler to organise.

Some key questions which emerged were:

- When does literal representation enhance and when does it detract from the imagination?
- How to deal with stereotyping in traditional stories?
- How to maximise planning around the day by teachers?
- How much to add new elements to the storyday package?
- Can the visits also work as training days for observation by other teachers?

- How to incorporate the wealth of ideas and models into learning resources for teachers?
- How to extend co-operation with organisations reaching those most in need, such as with Family Literacy?

Networking, Discussions and Future Directions of the Schools Programme (Section 4).

The storyteller made (one day) visits to five story-related institutions, discussing with staff and observing the museum functioning. This provided insight into various diverse approaches to promoting story and enabled the generous sharing of lessons learned by these institutions. There were many offers of further advice and help if needed, and a general wish for collaboration and cooperation.

In addition regular meetings were held with the Story Museum Director to discuss future vision and strategy and elaborate design principles and ideas for future exhibits, including two specific exhibition outlines.

Finally two discussion papers were written for internal policy review: a strategy paper setting out a proposed future direction for the SSS (Section 4.3) and the other discussing the SSS mission and the way that could be used in planning and evaluation of the future work. (Section 4.4).

The strategy paper argued for an ongoing SSS programme given its now proven cost effectiveness in inspiring children about story, and in including those who are hard to engage and those who might never come to a central facility. It proposed offering five kinds of school services:

- Performance plus exhibition
- Stand alone performances without exhibitions
- Stand alone exhibitions without performance
- Single class workshops and extended residencies
- Teacher training courses and resources

The following themes were suggested for possible inclusion in such a programme:

- Greek Myths (Minos, Odysseus)
- Arab and Islamic story (Tree of Life)
- Stories from around the world for younger (KS1) children and older (KS2-3)
- Roman Story (Aeniad)
- Arthurian Legend (Lancelot, Gawain)
- Gilgamesh
- Myths of Ancient Egypt (Isis)
- Tales with Multiple Variants from different countries (Fire-bird, Cinderella)
- Indian story (Ramayana)
- African Story
- Oxfordshire Myths and Legends (Llud, Frideswide and others)
- Shakespeare (Macbeth)

It was also recommended to explore ways of incorporating books and literary stories into the repertoire of storydays.

Finally it was noted that such a programme would require adequate longer term (3 year) funding for key positions and for a workshop/storage space. An indicative budget was proposed as a basis for future fundraising. To run such a programme for 100 schools per year over three years, and for developing a repertoire of the kind suggested would require a subsidy of £30,000 per year running costs and another £20,000 per year for exhibition and storyday development. Such a programme would reach 20,000 children per year.

Overall the project places the Story Museum in a much stronger position, enhancing reputation, networking, experience and expertise county-wide. It provides a good platform for the next stage of the Story Museum's overall programme to create a permanent centre to inspire children about story and books in the heart of Oxford.

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- Kay Sentence exhibition design
- Vergine Gulbenkian evaluation and assistance on storydays
- Jenny Campbell photography
- Jo Freer iron man report

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In a few short months it has been a privilege to connect with so many inspiring children and adults, to see so many people having a great time, and to get so much encouragement and advice wherever I looked. Thanks to all who have been involved thus far.

Finally I owe a special thanks to Kim Pickin whose extraordinary commitment, dedication and vision for the Story Museum idea has made this work possible, and whose personal support and encouragement throughout this project kept me going, helping me refind the plot when it seemed all but lost!

Chris Smith PhD
School Story Service Director and Storyteller in Residence

1. Introduction

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Background

The Story Museum is an Oxfordshire-based project dedicated to inspiring children about book and stories of all kinds. One part of our long-term vision is to create a major visitor attraction in the centre of Oxford City, bringing stories to life for visitors and celebrating the cultural heritage of the city.

While this long term project is in the pipeline, the Story Museum is running an outreach programme involving activities in schools and the community with the same core aim of inspiring children about stories. This enables us to develop experience and expertise which will be invaluable when creating and running the permanent museum. At the same time there is a compelling argument for retaining some elements of an outreach programme once a central facility is established, in order to connect with children who might not have the chance to visit a central attraction.

In June 2005, after several two years of preparation, the Story Museum publicly announced its ambition to create a permanent home and launched its first outreach programmes. That Autumn we began a programme of family events (at which children’s authors and illustrators combine performances and hands-on activities) and a pilot project in schools developing the idea of a Story Museum storyday.

The First Storyday

It was clear from the start that the Story Museum needed to understand how best to combine story performance, objects and activities to inspire children in different ways. The design was based on the idea that the Story Museum is likely to explore relationships between exhibition and narratives, developing ways to do this which inspire children in various ways. Our first school storyday explored one way of doing this, combining a whole school storytelling performance with a simple exhibition which retold the story using pictures, objects and sounds, sequenced and labelled in the order of the story narrative. We chose the Minotaur to trial this idea as our first theme, as it is one of the most commonly used stories by primary schools for covering the Greeks so we knew there would be a demand.

The storyday was implemented in 27 schools around the county, to a total of about 5,000 children at an introductory fee of £150 per school. Although a flyer was sent out to all schools most were enrolled in the scheme by head teachers at cluster meetings (Headington for Oxford City, Banbury City, and Banbury Village Cluster (the Warriner Partnership)). These clusters provided a broad cross section of schools spanning the full range of achievement across the county in Oxford and Banbury.

These first storydays were received extremely enthusiastically by both pupils and teachers: most appreciated were the quality of attention achieved when listening to a one hour story and the level of engagement and absorption in the multi-sensory exhibition.

In one cluster a twilight in-service training session was run for all the teachers in the cluster, introducing the storyday idea and offering some tools for working with the story. These added a lot to the storyday as the teachers were prepared and enthusiastic in advance so developed programmes of work around the storyday.

This Project

In December 2005 we received funding from the Arts Council and others to help us develop a sustainable longer term strategy for the Story Museum's schools programme which would also help to inform and support our work towards a permanent home. The project was designed to address some of our creative, educational, organisational and financial questions through:

- Implementing and evaluating a second Story Museum Storyday to further refine and develop the storyday idea and incorporate the lessons learned into our future planning;
- Implementing a residency in a school from a disadvantaged area to learn more about children's preferences for story and learning, to help us plan future residencies and other related activities;
- Visiting selected organisations working in similar areas to the Story Museum to (a) construct creative and cooperative links and (b) exchange lessons learned from these projects to assist our own planning.
- Taking time to reflect on the programme's future and develop a plan for the next few years' work.

This report summarises how we implemented these activities, the lessons learned and their implications for the Story Museum and its schools programme.

2. The Residency

2.1 Preparation

In January 2006 we visited Wood Farm primary for a Minotaur storyday, and were impressed by the positive response of the head teacher, staff and pupils to the event. The visit was well organised and various programmes of work were planned around the day. As the school serves one of the disadvantaged city estates, it seemed like a good choice for a residency as the head had been encouraging about future cooperation with the school.

Accordingly we approached the school by email in February asking if the school was interested and received a positive response. In March a meeting was held with the Head presenting our proposal for the residency which had the primary aim of helping us learn about preferences around story and learning about story, to help us plan our future programme (annex 1). The project was to use the idea of a story scrapbook in which children would present descriptions of their favourite stories from various genres. These stories would be explored in the residency using various playful drama-based techniques with the children having time to compile pictures and text in their scrapbooks between sessions. The head suggested years 2 and 6 as being suitable from their point of view, mentioning that, although they had SATs tests that term they would have plenty of time for the project. Meetings were set up with the two class teachers in a subsequent lunch break in which they agreed to the idea.

2.2 Delivery

A preliminary session was held with each of the two classes on 30th March, designed to understand more about the kinds of stories each class was interested in. This was implemented using a frame story and asking each child to choose a favourite story they might tell as part of the story. They were asked to draw a picture and give a title for each story which covered the genres:

- Story about my family
- Story about my school
- Story from a book
- Story from TV
- Story from a movie
- Story about where I live

The matrix below summarises the results, providing a profile of the story preferences of Wood Farm children. Perhaps most noteworthy is the plethora of negative stories about Wood Farm by year 6, illustrating an element of how living on the estate is viewed by the children. It was clear in the class that there was a great deal of excitement associated with these stories. It was not possible to find out, in this session, the extent to which they were fact and the extent of urban legend.

In addition it is worth reflecting on some of the favourite TV and Movie stories – shows which are intended for adults.

Profile of Stories Selected by Year 6 and year 2 Classes at Wood Farm as stories they would like to tell to a Trusted Grandfather

Story Type	Year 6		Year 2	
	F	M	F	M
Family	My dog Computer games Arguing about washing Sleepy cat Arguing and the fixing the Computer Secrets Winning at rugby Mum helping me to cook Watching my team win on Telly Me cooking	Badminton Computer games*** Helping with washing Football*** Cat eats my dinner Arguing about snoring Watching football on telly Last football training** Watching news on telly	Going to the park *** Going swimming***** A party Watching TV In the garden with a pond	Swimming Playing Simpsons hit and run on Xbox Playstation Gameboy ** Going to the park Playing football at the park Having fun in a field Me and my football**
School	Computer time Nasty teachers Wanting to choose I am strong (fighter) Unfair marks Exciting things Good marks** My best friend Telling Gran about good marks	Detention** Good marks *** Fighting** Working hard Not fair, its my turn to play football Happy art class Low marks Teachers pulling hair Playing 40-40	Playing on monkey bars**** Fire alarm went off** Playing* Watching a film (Cinderella) Getting glue on my coat Trip to see bunny rabbits On a trip** Trip to the hills At the park Numeracy Literacy Lunch	School on fire (alarm)***** Working hard Playing football at school Playing in the playground Playing on monkey bars
Book	Room 131** Cheats Harry Potter*** Goose Bumps Muddle Earth Jacqueline Wilson (Double Act and Sleepovers) The Best Friend Back-front Benjy	The French Confection Point Blank Cheat Book Car Book Henries Birthday Johnnies Blitz Harry Potter**** Hot Air Balloons A Guide to the Weather Shark Key Wind in the Willows Vampires Assistant Room 13	Sleeping Beauty*** Beauty and the beast Puss in boots Sleeping beauty and the bad witch Ballet shoes What makes a rainbow*** King Urru Cinderella*** Sleeping beauty Sots big ache Puppy Puss Aladdin, Money, Jasmine Snow White	Robin Hood and the Bad King Spider Man ** 3 Little pigs and the big bad wolf Peter Pan** Sots big ache Swimming book Celtic FC Man City
TV	Footballers Wives*** Wrestling Simpsons**** Eastenders Tracy Beaker	Simpsons ***** Boxing Cartoons News Cricket (Pakistan vs England) Weather Dr Who	Polly and her three friends That's so raven Fifi forget-me-not Mickey mouse gets married Cave bears**** Mickey Mouse, Mini Mouse and their castle Barbie and the magical Pegasus*** Zak and Coby Barnaby bear and Becky Scoobidoo** Pixel Perfect Little Mermaid	Celtic Football Incredible Hulk Simpsons That's so raven Football on Sky Sports Pixel perfect Power rangers** Scoobiedoo Football match

Movie	Mean Girls 50 cents gets rich Princess Diaries Mean Girls Coyote Ugly Cinderella Story Little Britain Incredibles Shrek Harry Potter	White Chicks Harry Potter** Terminator Fast Car Movie The incredibles The Matrix Ice Age** I robot Dumb and Dumber Alien vs Predator Pay it forward Madagascar	Nanny MCFee Ballerina dancing until its bedtime Narnia***** Dora the Explora The princess was skating Dinosaur Big Mama 2 Cave Bears Dinosaur Scoobidoo Clifford Barbie	Dinosaurs*** Motorbike jumps through rings of fire Shark tale Ice age Narnia** Lion King James bond
Place	ASBO gossip Nicking stuff Love Gossip** Stories about Gangs Graffiti Fighting Children fighting Shop getting improved Seeing teacher in her car	Suicide from Tower (Attempt?)*** Finding Money Car and Running Races Car Accident Graffiti Fighting in the Woods Trees Vandalised Bullying on the street every day after school at 3.30 Fighting** Someone got shot Dead animal on the road	Where I live* The street I live in is tidy My cat was sick Wood farm has lots of flats Car crash The bad man came Nicking something from the shops*** I live here** Moving house My street My school	Shops on fire Smashed window of off licence Wood farm is a loud place I play in the (football) cage*** Shopping Football

Future Issues:

- 1. Explore urban legends in future residencies (year 4-6+)***
- 2. Repeat the story matrix exercise in other schools and compare; explore as potential rapid assessment tool and as a learning exercise***

This first workshop was held before the Easter vacation. 6 further meetings were held with each class during term 5, exploring notions of favourite story in more detail. In general the approach with both classes was to use speaking, listening, imagining and acting exercises of various kinds to explore a particular favourite story, followed by an exercise to record the ideas developed in the story scrapbook. Similar exercises were used with each class. The details are shown in the table below.

Week	Activity	Description
1	Story Matrix Exercise	
1.1	Snip-snip story and song	Frame story inviting ideas from class.
1.2	Choose favourite stories and draw them	Pictures and text of the stories collected.
2	Your favourite character	
2.1	Tell-me-more Q&A game	This is a pairs question and answer game, through which a character is discovered and explored.
2.2	Reflecting, copying game	A whole class game where movement and sound

		connected to the character is reflected back by the whole group.
2.3	Favourite character walkabout game	Walk around the room as your chosen character and chat with others. Develop ideas about the character.
2.4	Draw favourite character	Picture for scrap book.
2.5	Write about favourite character	Text about character and why liked.
3	Your favourite (fictional) story	
3.1	Guess the feeling game	Warm-up- expressing and guessing the feeling of a moment from the story.
3.2	Story stepping stones and telling	Making physical steps for the narrative helps make the narrative steps clear: a playful way to start telling.
3.3	Telling a story in pairs	This time you tell to a partner, who is asked to give appreciative support.
3.4	Telling to whole class (or listening)	Volunteers then see what it is like to entertain the whole class, again to appreciative feedback.
3.5	Storyboard pictures	A storyboard is created to retell the chosen story in your own way.
3.6	Story writing	The story may then be written, based on the storyboard outline.
4 (Yr 6)	Making Up Stories	The teacher suggested developing a group project where the students would develop chapters from a fictional story set in Wood Farm, using known fictional story characters (e.g. what would Dr Who do if he came to Wood Farm) and compile into an exhibition for parents and the school to visit.
4.1	City of Rome Game	Group imagination game, to strengthen visual imagination and create ideas about Wood Farm.
4.2	Choosing a favourite story as basic for project	Group suggested and debated with votes until favourite (Simpsons) was selected.

4.3	Brainstorm plot ideas	Individual plot ideas written on post it's and discussed with class.
5.1	Draw plot map-storyboard	Groups begin work on their chapters to the story using pictures and text in creative combination.
4 (Yr 2)	Making Up Stories	
4.1	Listen to King and Cockerel Story and make up dream sequence	Group demo of making up your own story
4.3	Guided storyboard where you make up a story of your own and write it down.	Simple storyboard with text boxes
5	Stories About Me (
5.1	Talking about me	Q and A exercise in pairs
5.2	Talking about me (whole class)	Q and A for whole class
5.3	Talking about a story in pairs	
5.4	Drawing the story and adding notes	
6 (Yrs 2 & 6)	Listening to a story (Jack and the Bulls Milk)	Single class story with singing (45 minutes)

The images below show class-6 re-enactment of some of the games.

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2.3 Evaluation and Feedback

Year 2 Students

At the end of the term a 2 hour meeting was held with all of year 2 and half of year 6 to run through the various activities and get a sense of preferences.

Classes were asked to recall each activity and rate it on a 1-5 scale to indicate level of enjoyment where 5=great and 1= terrible using a show of hands. Notes were also made of discussions following each item. The results are shown below for each year group.

Table – Year 2 Feedback on Residency Activities

Week	Activity	5	4	3	2	1
1	Story Matrix Exercise					
1.1	Snip-snip story and song	26	2	2	1	2
1.2	Choose favourite stories and draw them	16	3	4	2	2
2	Your favourite character					
2.1	Tell-me-more Q&A game	25	2	0	0	2
2.2	Reflecting, copying game	23	4	1	0	4
2.3	Favourite character walkabout game	10	2	3	0	12
2.4	Draw favourite character	11	6	3	1	5
2.5	Write about favourite character	10	4	2	2	5
3	Your favourite story					
3.1	Guess the feeling game	18	0	2	1	7
3.2	Story stepping stones and telling	14	2	4	0	3
3.3	Telling a story in pairs	3	5	7	4	6
3.4	Telling to whole class (or listening)	6	7	2	8	2
3.5	Storyboard pictures	4	6	4	3	8
3.6	Story writing	9	5	4	2	4
4	Making Up Stories					
4.1	Listen to King and Cockerel Story	19	4	0	0	1
4.2	Make up dream sequence together in large group	27	2	0	0	0
4.3	Guided storyboard where you make up a story with pictures	6	1	2	4	8
	Then write it down	9	5	4	2	4
5	Stories About Me					
5.1	Talking about me	10	1	2	6	2
5.2	Talking about me (whole class)	3	2	8	0	3
5.3	Talking about a story in pairs					
5.4	Drawing the story and adding notes	5	3	6	1	6
6	Listening to a story (Jack and the Bulls Milk)	30	0	0	0	0
7	Painting charcoal and pastel pictures	25	0	0	1	0

The highest scoring activity for this class seems to be the simple act of **listening and interacting with a story**. Most popular was (6) simply listening and singing along, while the other stories (1.1 and 4.1) has amongst the highest scores.

Otherwise the next most popular were:

4.2 Making up a story with the whole class (27 voted 5). This was an exercise where the questions are asked by the storyteller and every answer is unconditionally accepted as part of the story. The storyteller holds responsibility for creating the final story and the class is free to suggest as they wish.

2.1 Tell me more (pairs) game (25 voted 5) where the listener asks a storyteller to say more (anything they want) choosing a word from the previous sentence.

7 Drawing with charcoal and pastels (25 voted 5).

2.2 Reflecting Game (23 voted 5) where movement and sound is copied in a whole class circle, led first by the storyteller and then by students.

2.3 Guess the feeling (18 voted 5) where a student improvises a feeling and the class is given three chances to guess the emotion.

1.2 Making quick sketches of favourite stories from within a frame story (16 voted 5)

3.2 Stepping through a story as it is told (14 voted 5)

At the least popular end we have a group who **gave low scores for all drawing activities**: 4.3 and 3.5 Guided storyboard (8 voted 1); 5.4 Drawing a story (6 voted 1); 2.4 drawing a character (5 voted 1).

In addition the character walkabout game scored the highest number of "1" votes (12) and guess the feeling (7).

Discussion of Yr 2 Results

The results demonstrate clearly the diversity of response in the class – aside from the near unanimous love of a well told story, different children liked different things: one size does not fit all. *Conclusion: A well told story creates excitement and enthusiasm and forms an excellent platform for other kinds of work which might be less effective without such a lead-in. This validates the approach of combining performance with follow up activities.*

Generally children seemed to give high scores in activities in which they felt safe and able to do well. Many of those who disliked drawing did so because they "were no good at it" yet those same children loved drawing with pastels and charcoal, because they did not have a sense of doing it wrong (there was less of a preconceived idea of a "good outcome" and more of a sense of playfulness.) *Conclusion: we should pay attention to the skills of appreciation, non-judgemental feedback and confidence building as part of our programme in order to better encourage children to connect with stories in new ways.*

The sheer diversity of response is clear, with the same exercise being loved and hated by different children. It is clear that both pairs and whole class exercises were enjoyed, where they felt comfortable and confident enough to enjoy them.

Year 2 Selected Quotes

I found the walkabout to the drum confusing – we got too excited – it would be better without the drum and should be calmer.

I don't like drawing 'cos I don't think I can do it right

I was embarrassed to talk to the whole class
I was bored, waiting too long between things

If you enjoyed the writing, why?:

Doing it right
Writing exciting words
Enjoying the words
Explaining things better

If you didn't enjoy the writing, why?

I don't like writing 'cos I cant write the words I want and it is hard to spell
My hand aches
Can't write what I want to say
I don't like my mistakes

Year 6 Feedback

The debrief with year 6 was only possible with half the class; the teacher was not present and keeping the focus of the group proved challenging, so the matrix was not completed.

Table – Year 6 Feedback on Residency Activities

Week	Activity	5	4	3	2	1
1	Story Matrix Exercise					
1.1	Snip-snip story and song	6	6	1	0	2
1.2	Choose favourite stories and draw them	1	2	3	2	5
2	Your favourite character					
2.1	Tell-me-more Q&A game	5	0	2	0	4
2.2	Reflecting, copying game	5	3	2	1	3
2.3	Favourite character walkabout game	5	1	1	1	2
2.4	Draw favourite character	4	3	2	1	1
2.5	Write about favourite character	0	1	2	1	6
3	Your favourite (fictional) story					

3.1	Guess the feeling game	9	3	0	2	0
3.2	Story stepping stones and telling	3	2	3	2	1
3.3	Telling a story in pairs	0	4	2	3	2
3.5	Storyboarding	4	2	3	2	1
4+5	Making Up Stories (Year 6)					
4.1	City of Rome Game	6	3	3	0	1
4.2	Choosing a favourite story as basic for project					
4.3	Brainstorm plot ideas					
5.1	Draw plot map-storyboard					
	Hot seating	13				1

It was clear that this class, too, loved listening to stories. In addition their overwhelming wish was to have more autonomy and freedom in what they do. Their favourite game by far was whole class hotseating to explore characters, where they are free to ask any question. In what was a generally quite rowdy class they were able to work with focus and independence on this game. A similar kind of freedom was present in the various speaking. As before, students disliked a sense of doing things wrong and not being good enough.

Conclusion: a varied repertoire of story games was highly valued by students and teachers. We should develop our knowledge of such games and be positioned to demonstrate and pass these on to teachers.

Teacher Feedback

We were only able to have one full exit interview with the year 2 teacher. (There were scheduling difficulties and then illness prevented the final interview).

Her comments are summarised below.

"It was really good. The children especially loved listening to the stories, joining in, and some of the games you taught them. Watching you work made me realise how difficult they found it to develop their own story ideas and how important it was to break down making stories into small steps in the way that you showed us.

Main benefits for the children were:

- *listening to stories, and seeing they do not have to come from a book – that they can be imagined*
- *joining in with stories*
- *learning how to make their own stories*
- *speaking and listening skills – realising they can sit happily for an hour listening to a story*
- *Questioning skills – the games and exercises helped them learn how to ask questions which many have found very difficult.*
- *The group stories showed that when they all work together they can succeed*
- *Also many grew in confidence at speaking in front of the class as a whole*

Main benefits as a teacher :

- *a chance to watch the class as a whole, and observe how children responded - I gained a lot from that*
- *I got many ideas for teaching including games and exercises for speaking and listening, questioning and storymaking. It helped me see how tasks can be broken down into smaller, do-able steps.*

How could it have been improved:

- *sometimes perhaps shorter periods for some of the on-the-carpet activities, so that they keep fully engaged*
- *they would have enjoyed more drama to go with the other activities*
- *the timing was a problem as it was SATs term for the class, I was busy and could not be involved much of the time – another time it should be in a term where I could be fully engaged with the visit and the project as a whole.*

Suggestions for the Story Museum work in schools:

- *Just storytelling is extremely valuable for children. They love it, learn about listening and about imagination, and a teacher can follow up from a storytelling visit – so simple storytelling days in school would be welcome.*
- *Also, there is something valuable about storytelling to a single class – it is more intimate and they can have more personal interaction. I know it is more expensive but should be considered.*
- *Shorter, KS1 stories would be good for us – the long stories (1 hour) are a bit too much for my kids. Also consider using props and objects in the telling.*
- *This age loves being involved and joining in, so have more stories like that.*
- *Shorter (1 hour visits) with more visits could also be better than single days, with teacher following up in between.*

Personally I would love to be able to do storytelling without a book and just make up stories – I'd love to attend training to help me do that.

It is clear from the above that the teacher found the residency activities were considered very worthwhile for her and the class.

2.4. Conclusions

- *Consider revising residency models for KS1 to include more drama, shorter activity duration.*
- *Ensure teacher availability as clear full partner in future residency projects.*
- *Consider adding a storytelling-only model to our programme without the exhibition paraphernalia (simpler) and which can include single class visits (shorter?). Say half an hour per class all day.....*
- *Consider developing KS1 storydays using joining in tales.*
- *Consider develop storytelling-for-teachers activities through pilot project.*

Completion and Partnerships

While both class teachers agreed in advance that they would take the work forward between classes, in practice the pressure of competing demands made this problematic for both classes. While year 2 did complete its scrapbook, it proved difficult simply to complete the activities initiated in each session. This was because the teacher was very busy working around the SATs assessment which took her away from the class both during and between visits – teaching assistants and supply teachers were not clear or particularly enthusiastic about the project. The scrapbooks are very interesting and provide a valuable reference for the Story Museum but I am not sure how much pride or sense of achievement they gave the children.

For year 6 the teacher was away the majority of the time and work was left late. In theory she had planned to conduct intensive work on the stories and exhibitions after the SATs test in the last 3 weeks but in practice the task was not to my knowledge completed, partly because it seemed to be difficult to maintain class focus when they knew that this was the last term before changing schools. Perhaps this was not ideal timing for such a project for them.

Conclusion: in the future pay more attention to negotiation of roles and responsibilities during a residency project with more time available to ensure satisfying completion for students.

3. The Storyday Trial

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3.1 Introduction

Following the enthusiastic reception of our first storyday (Minotaur) we decided to trial a second storyday which connected to the theme of Arab and Islamic culture. The basis of this choice was feedback from autumn meetings with several groups of head teachers and teachers who – when offered various themes – were most enthusiastic about this one. Given the plethora of negative images around Arabs and Muslims teachers were keen to offer some kind of positive response, while others were keen to find a more engaging way of covering Islam in the syllabus.

Also – given that this is an area of particular expertise of Chris Smith – we were confident that an excellent performance and exhibition could be created in a short space of time.

The story chosen was an Iraqi wondertale, “The Tree of Life”, already tried and tested in schools, featuring music and song as well as story. The overall plot is simpler than for the Minotaur without all the long Greek names that younger audience members find difficult. Like many wondertales it has the power to create deep imaginative absorption in the audience. In contrast to the tragic Minotaur it is a lighter, more playful and comic tale.

We decided to work towards testing of the storyday in term 6 (June and early July) in order to give 5 months for design and creation of the exhibition and supporting materials.

Main steps in the project were as follows:

- Jan** Recruit Exhibition Assistant Kay Sentence (KS) to the Project and invite her to performance of story
- Feb** Agree on draft Terms of Reference for KS (see annex) and begin research and procurement
- April/May** Series of meetings with CS to finalise creation and procurement of objects
- April/May** Create bookings for 15 storydays in Oxfordshire schools

April/May	Development of support materials to go out to school
April/May	Recruit External Evaluators
May	Create labels and complete stands and frames
May	Pre-pilot test and adjustment of exhibition
June/July	Implement storydays
August	Evaluate and Document

3.2 Concept and Design Process

The main idea for the exhibition was to build on the basic principles of a “narrative walk” which proved successful in the Minotaur storyday – i.e. a series of pictures, sounds, smells and objects which retell the story sequenced in the order of the narrative. Based on student and teacher feedback on how to improve on the Minotaur trial we tried to have:

- More things to touch
- More sounds
- More smells
- More things to do

In addition we wanted to have a section on the cultural and religious background of Iraq to provide a teaching link with themes of Islam and Arab culture.

These principles were spelt out in the initial terms of reference for the exhibition, in which the story was broken down into about 30 main steps with ideas for how some of these steps might be represented in the exhibition (see annex 3). We then had series of iterative sessions in which we brainstormed new ideas, made searches – mainly by internet – for objects and pictures, and experimented with creating other objects and pictures.

Through this process an exhibition was created comprising:

- An introductory section of 11 context exhibits about Iraq, its people and religion;
- A 37 exhibit narrative featuring:
 - 15 touchable exhibits
 - 5 smell exhibits (7 different smells)
 - 6 sound exhibits
 - 2 interactive pictures on which students can write comments
 - 9 pictures
- A number of activities to undertake after completing the exhibition including dressing up hats and masks; puppets; Arabic writing; drum practice and story games.

Details of the exhibits and associated narrative can be found in annex 2.

This exhibition was much too big to fit in a car, so a trailer was purchased for transportation. This also saved a lot of time and energy because there was no need to unpack and then repack the car after and before each storyday.

We also designed an evaluation scheme comprising:

- exit interviews with students
- exit interviews with teachers
- comments book
- voting for favourite items activity
- external observer input

(See Annex 4 for detailed evaluation scheme).

3.3 Learnings on Exhibition Making

Many detailed learnings were achieved concerning creation of a robust exhibition which can be put up and taken down in about an hour. (These will help improve quality and time taken for future designs). Here is a selection:

- The tables we used were made from self assembly plastic shelving and worked extremely well being cheap (£5 each), robust, light and easy to modify for MP3 and DVD insertion.
- When stacking tables they can be spiral stacked with one leg removed and placed in the table shelf itself. Luggage straps with a ratchet type buckle are a good strong way to hold the tables together which can stack 8-10 at a time if the lifter is strong enough to carry them
- For sound exhibits the cheap (£15) MP3 players work well enough, and will run on a rechargeable battery for 8 or so hours with no problem. They can fit snugly down one of the table legs and are best stored in there between exhibitions to save time setting up. There needs to be a robust plug below the player in the leg which should be screwed and glued to ensure that it goes to the right height. The opening in the table joint needs to be expanded slightly which is probably easiest with hot metal.
- The cover above the MP3 player was attached with gaffer tape which worked well, but probably we can work out a more elegant design for the future. Perhaps some kind of screw top.
- Because one headphone speaker is often used per child it is best to download in mono, making sure that both channels are carrying the track.
- MP3 players were set on repeat and so played the same track continually all day which worked fine and was simple. Every now and then they turned themselves off for no clear reason but were easily restarted.
- It is good to have the MP3s hidden, to give a sense of mystery about the source.
- Batteries were best recharged during the exhibition and changed before packing up, to save time the next day setting up. It was important to have chargers which had completion indicators in them to avoid confusion. It would be neater to have a single large recharger unit for all the batteries next time, rather than two small ones.

- Moveable headphone/MP3 sets can be bought for £100: with these, the speaker and headphones are one unit and they could simply be attached to the station with a string and listened to. However only one can listen at a time and there is still a tangling risk. They could be good for a walkabout exhibition where the narrative plays as the visitors walk around. Also we should learn more about the audio and audio-visual museum gizmos that are used in many public museums now.
- We used small speaker type headphones which (a) reduced risk of ear infection from in-ear models while (b) allowing two to listen to a single pair of headphones at the same time (very important to reduce waiting times at each station). Where there were two on each station this was appreciated but there was a major problem of tangling which needs thought for next time. Perhaps spacing the speakers on opposite sides of the table with under wiring might help with a sign saying please untangle before leaving. Only one speaker broke the whole time so they seem robust enough.
- The text labels were A5 laminates – one fitting each side of the table – glue or double sided tape was not strong enough for them – we should revert to the gaffer tape solution (folded over into double sided tape- which worked fine for the Minotaur.) The large (18pt) font worked well for younger readers and we should keep it for primary work.
- The numbers were paper printed and taped on – this was not strong enough. Also the style of the numbers was a little hard for some to read. We should consider reverting to the heavy duty stick-on number used in the Minotaur if we can find a source.
- It would be good to look at different colours for similar tables to give more colour options in the future.
- Make duplicates of everything to avoid crises and give time to fix things.
- The most effective smell exhibits were created in simple ways. Exhibits had strong (citrus) essential oils dripped on them and could be smelled easily by the visitors (although it helped to have a note inviting them to do this). Absorbent cloth on an exhibit helps too. However, many oils are not strong enough to work in this way so it may restrict us to a limited number of smells. They needed redripping once or twice a day.
- The witch smell was simply a seaweed face wash bar put in a tin to keep the smell in. Visitors opened the tin, had a sniff, gave a cry of shock and closed the tin. Many loved the surprise and shock of its disgustingness. This is a simple way too, but need a way of finding objects which retain their smell for most of the day.
- Incense was controversial – some loving it and others hating it. I was struck by the enormous variety in how sensitive visitors were to smell. Incense and smoke also adds a theatrical dimension.

- Essential oil warmers are quite simple but have various limitations – first they need a power supply which adds to set-up time. Second they need refilling every half an hour or so once oils have evaporated. However with something that retains its smell they worked well – in this case with a jar of honey.
- The pestle and mortar was great combining touching, working, looking and smelling. We should use this again.
- We used A1 frames rather than larger ones this time and the size was fine. This saved space and weight. We used cheap (£7) clip frames with clips removed, simply taping the plastic front to the plywood back. Attaching the pictures and cards to the back paper using good amounts of good quality mounting spray worked well and better than sellotape, double-sided tape, or other kinds of glue.
- Using transparent tape for attaching the plastic cover to the back looked best as it was more or less invisible. We should usually use this method in the future.
- Remember to photograph the image for a resource CD before putting the cover on the picture as there is always some reflected glare in the photo otherwise.
- In future exhibits it would probably be good to spend more time imagining schemes before making them. Also the makers should know if they also have a role in design and how that process may work.
- There is an enormous amount of material which can be explored on the internet – where things can be bought this is better because it means they can be re-ordered.
- Where special objects are created, have two made before the project end. They need to be very robust, even when labelled don't touch. Curators should have the paints and colouring used so repairs can be made on the hoof when needed.

<p>Photo removed.</p> <p>Photographic permission only available for internal reference and not for public viewing.</p>	<p>Photo removed.</p> <p>Photographic permission only available for internal reference and not for public viewing.</p>	<p>Photo removed.</p> <p>Photographic permission only available for internal reference and not for public viewing.</p>
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3.4 Preparation and Marketing

The performance and exhibition was first trialled on 15th May at Edward Feild School, Kidlington. Feedback from the teachers and students was very positive; both feeling there was a significant improvement in quality of the exhibition compared with the Minotaur storyday.

Several modifications were suggested and adopted including:

- Instead of allowing a class to stay in the hall after visiting the exhibition, we packed up the activities into boxes which could be taken into classrooms for an extended period during the day. This enabled more time to use the activities and reduced the amount of noise and excitement in the hall which had been a major distraction.
- Including more music and participation in the performance.
- Reducing the introductory section of the performance.
- Slightly reducing the number of exhibits.

In this way the final exhibition was constructed and a set of information materials designed to send in advance to all participating schools, comprising:

- List of exhibits and text
- Plot outline
- Character list
- 20 suggestions for ways to teach around the event (see annex 2)

Initially we tried to recruit new schools to the project by running a taster session for one of the East Oxford clusters of schools (24 April), after which they organised a meeting with the school heads to plan, but a meeting could not be organised until June, and so the new booking had to be arranged for the autumn term.

Learning: it takes several months to arrange taster sessions and meetings with new clusters. These need to be planned well in advance of future implementation. (Say 4 terms lead in time from cold).

Once it became clear that there was not time to implement the East Oxford plan, 15 dates for the performance were created by circulating a flyer to all Oxfordshire schools (via the LEA), and by calling up schools which had already had the Minotaur and offering them the Tree of Life at the new price of £300 for an audience of 150 plus and a lower fee for smaller schools (minimum fee £200).

This enabled us to test out the level of repeat demand at a higher price – an extremely important indicator of long term demand. The results were encouraging: all schools contacted said they would like a repeat booking – those who declined for the summer term said they would have liked to book for autumn. 10 of the 15 storydays were repeat bookings in this way. **This showed clearly that - once a high quality reputation is established - many schools are willing to pay £300 for a storyday.**

The dates for the storyday tour are shown below:

	School	Date	New/Repeat Booking
1	St Mary and John (Free taster for Oxford Cluster)	24.4	New
2	Edward Field	15.5	Repeat
3	Standlake	5.6	New
4	Shiplake	7.6	Repeat
5	St Michaels Oxford	8.6	New
6	Sibford	12.6	Repeat
7	Dashwood	14.6	Repeat
8	Thomas Moore Kidlington	16.6	New
9	Deddington	19.6	Repeat
10	St Leanards	20.6	Repeat
11	Bishop Loveday	23.6	Repeat
12	Bayards Hill	26.6	Repeat
13	Shennington	28.6	Repeat
14	Cherwell (after school show too)	30.6	New
15	The Grange*	5.7*	Repeat

*Grange was cancelled due to illness and has been rebooked for September 22nd.

Calling up previous clients was efficient, filling 10 spots in a few hours work: once they had experience of the storyday quality, the schools they were eager to sign up to new events and needed no calling back This validates a model of reaching a new cluster by:

- *Free taster for one school*
- *Meeting with cluster heads to plan cluster level work including twilight inset*
- *Rebooking future dates via telephone or via cluster contact*

3.5 Delivery and Evaluation Feedback

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3.5.1 Performance

a. Description

The youngest audience for the performance included four year olds when the head sneaked a reception class in without asking. The oldest were 14/15 year olds at Cherwell School. A total of 3,100 children attended the performances. The show lasted between 50 minutes and 80 minutes, varying with audience and delivery. Over the period it developed in several ways:

Consistent feedback from children was in favour of more music, so two songs were added to the show where the audience joined in (one song to help the prince climb the tree, and the other sung by the maidens to the prince). These proved very popular and have added variety and break from silent listening, even though the result was - at times - an 80 minute show.

The musical/sound additions to the story became:

1. Oud and Arabic song at the start
2. Use of the duff drum in the dream sequence
3. Use of table (darabuka) drum in horse sequence
4. Song to join in with for tree climbing sequence
5. Song to join in with when maidens emerge from fruits
6. Arab love song with Oud when prince finds his love
7. Flute piece when prince falls depressed
8. Oud and wedding song at end

The introductory section talking about Iraq, the Arab world and storytelling was shortened, in recognition of the audience wanting to get on with the story.

After feedback from one of the external evaluators (VG) CS worked to project a louder and clearer voice throughout each session.

It is important to note that CS found the work schedule extremely grueling: driving the trailer, unloading and preparing the exhibition; performing; completing the exhibition set up; welcoming and debriefing a series of classes every half hour throughout the day; then packing up, loading the trailer and driving home was an exhausting task. As the weeks went by CS became more and more tired and finally fell ill and was unable to complete the last booking.

On some of the days an assistant was present to help set up the exhibition and work with the groups as they came through, and that was a great help. But what is needed for a viable future programme is an individual to take full responsibility for storing, transporting, setting up and taking down the exhibition, and managing groups as they pass through it (assistant curator post). This would leave the role of the storyteller to simply offering a top quality performance. For those not familiar with this genre it is important to remember that powerful engagement with an audience of 250 or so children takes a great deal of energy (and expertise). It is unrealistic to expect storytellers to do the other tasks.

The performance was evaluated in three ways:

- exit interviews with a total of 901 students (in 30 class debriefs)
- self administered questionnaires by 29 teachers
- comments by 5 external observers (two educationalists; one writer and workshop leader; one storyteller and a museum director). See annex 4 and 5 for full evaluation summary and external observer reports.

b. Student Feedback

Students were asked to imagine they were the teachers of the storyteller and give marks out of ten for how much they enjoyed the performance. 86% awarded marks of 9 or 10 suggesting generally high levels of enjoyment (although, as one observer noted, these marks only give a rather general idea, and some may be reluctant to criticize).

On a scale of 1-10 how much did you enjoy the performance?

Score	Number of children
1	2
2	
3	
4	2
5	7
6	7
7	23
8	71
9	166
10	623

Total	901

Children were asked to comment on favourite things about the performance and ways to improve it. In the year 1-3 group comments tended to focus on specific moments they liked in the story. Common responses included:

- The description of the magical horse descending.
- The description of the magical fruits at the top of the tree of life.
- The description of the hero’s journey down the path of trouble on which he was tested.
- The description of the wedding party at the end of the story.
- They liked all the music – both the songs in Arabic and the songs in English with which they participated, and the percussive accompaniment.
- They liked to hear another language (Arabic) being spoken.
- They liked the different voices used for the different characters.
- They found the story exciting.

When asked to suggest ways to improve the performance common responses were:

- More music – especially Arabic music.
- More acting (meaning characterisations) and funny voices
- More scary moments.
- More action.

Older children (years 4-7) were able to comment on aspects of performance and to have more of an overview. Aspects of the story that the children liked most were:

- The music – especially the oud.
- The singing.
- The voices and sound effects.
- The fact that one could really see the images in one's head. "You could really imagine it, like you were there."
- They found the story interesting and exciting and liked points of tension (for example the fact that the Queen forgot her promise).

Suggestions for improvement included:

- More action.
- More vocal variation.
- More drumming.
- More questions to the audience.
- Many children (and teachers) commented that it was difficult for the children to sit on the floor for one hour – so they would appreciate more comfortable seating or a chance to stretch and shake halfway through
- Clearer moods.
- Some bits were hard to imagine.
- More languages and songs in different languages

c. Teacher Feedback

Many teachers said they were very impressed by the level of quiet absorption achieved during the performance with generally close to 100% engagement from start to finish. For children who have trouble concentrating this was considered to be a great plus about the performance. Many teachers expressed to the storyteller the wish "to be able to do that".

The only question in the questionnaire specifically on the performance asked teachers to rate how well the storyday helped children to enjoy and understand a performance art form (scale 1-5, poor-excellent). 21 out of 29 awarded 5 marks for this question (average 4.7).

d. External Observer Feedback

The following are relevant excerpts from the evaluators' feedback reports.

Adam Guillain
(Author and Creative Writing Workshop Leader)

The children had a wonderful, high quality experience and it's a testimony to your storytelling skills that you could hold such an age-range for so long within the one narrative. Without seeing it work for these children for myself, I would have looked at that story and earmarked it exclusively for KS2 so thanks for challenging my expectations. I am absolutely convinced that you managed to inspire a love and hunger for story as well as projecting an insightful and tangible insight into an Islamic culture, so misperceived by our own and others. Some specific points relating to the various elements –

Apart from the music and the terrific play with the narrative dynamics, one of the strategies I thought was very effective was the way in which you stepped out of performance mode to engage the children with questions. I love that, because it makes you real and accessible and we get a sense that telling this story isn't just something that a performer does. At the time in the narrative I saw you do this, I was sitting there expecting one of the children to get the cook to make the prince a pizza and really break the magic (which they might well yet do in other performances) but they didn't.

Having said that, a part of me wanted to hear about the spices and exotic foods from such a mystical place and it shot through my mind that leading the children to imagining how a character feels in a certain situation – or getting them to imagine how a certain landscape or character might look - and playing with the adverbs and superlatives is safer and potentially less circuitous.....

Amelia Foster
(Roald Dahl Museum Director)

....Despite the length of the story, the children seemed very engaged and really enjoyed the music and interactive elements.

... The story was appropriate and interesting, and it is a great way to engage children in a different culture. Costumes or images might help the children to understand the context and could also provide a way of introducing some of the objects in the exhibition – they could then have the chance to handle these things. It would be all the more exciting as they will have seen them used by the storyteller. Children are very comfortable with props during the storytelling and in fact this was one of the suggestions made by the children themselves, as well as having the female parts played by a female.

Christine Lawson
(Local Authority: Education)

....Ways in which the performance engaged the children's interest:

- ***Questions, riddles, puzzles** were used throughout the story – i.e. what is it you can give away and keep at same time? Supported good use of thinking skills with brilliant answers – a tadpole, love, sound, peace, air – philosophical concepts were introduced in the interaction.*
- ***Wider Cultural context was introduced by talking about Iraqi stories:** i.e.: Iraq is a country full of stories, do you know any? Aladdin, Sinbad, Ali Baba.*
- ***Music** – this helped take the students to a place where they could experience the story. The drum added atmosphere and re-engaged attention.*

- **Songs** – children enjoyed joining in – they added to the emotional intensity of the story, especially when climbing the tree.
- **Physical movement** were enjoyed and mirrored by the audience, for example riding the horse, climbing the tree.
- **Choice** – Children enjoyed being involved in choice, and re-exploring a character dilemma through repetition.
- **Visualisation** – some of the intense descriptions, and most notably the old witch – was engaging and led to gasps of revulsion
- **Pace and Variety** – story was varied, lots of puzzles, questions, dilemmas – kept the children thinking.
- **Complex moral ideas explored through story** – stereotypes of old, ugly, witch like women, death, unhappiness, love, justice, retribution
- **Humour** – children enjoyed the funny parts

Important Educational Benefits:

- **Development of listening skills**, concentration
- **Use of imagination** – through sensory visualisation, empathy with characters
- **Thinking skills** – choices, opinions, what do you think? What would you do?
- **Reading response** - developing pleasure in reading/listening to story
- **Emotional intelligence** - engaging with feelings through emotional response to the story, helping them to understand their demons
- **Wider cultural awareness** – music, songs, language, stories from other cultures, based on underlying similarities with western culture

Tony Eade

(Educationalist and Ex-Head teacher)

...The session started at about 9.15 am and continued until about 10.30 am. The start felt slightly messy, with classes not coming in together, although Chris engaged the classes waiting. The introduction set the scene about traditions of storytelling in Iraq, linking well to children prior knowledge such as that of familiar stories, and how a story remains dynamic and capable of being retold in different ways. The content of the story session was pitched at the right level, with music and song and various techniques of story-telling used with great skill, weaving in humour and 'throwaway' comments not part of the main story line. Involving children by joining in songs seemed to work better than asking about and incorporating their knowledge and responses which was done at three or four points, though the interaction about which fruit the children would choose and why was very successful. Most of the children were engaged with the story, as reflected in the enthusiastic evaluation by holding up fingers.

I doubt that the main story needs to be so long and think that there would be some benefit in telling more than one story, maybe involving some of the same characters in each. I wondered whether hearing and seeing an expert story-teller engaging a large group of children for such a long time may give adults, especially, or children, the idea, conscious or otherwise, that telling stories is difficult. If there were two or three shorter stories, this might make the art of story-telling seem more accessible and possibly reflect different aspects of a culture or the genre of storytelling. It could enable younger children to be present for part of the session. ...

Vergine Gulbenkian
(Storyteller)

In every school the story was well received.

Even the most reluctant-seeming children were fully engaged with the story and trusted Chris to hold their attention within 5 minutes of the beginning. All ages loved the music, the imagery, the twists and turns of the plot, the audience participation – singing and answering questions.

Chris hit the right tone with all the different age groups – friendly enough to warm to and authoritative enough to trust.

Thinking about ways to improve the performance... I think storytellers are always aware that they cannot be complacent, and that they need to find ways to improve each performance. However, if one is performing the same story twice or three times a week keeping the story fresh is an issue. I think it helped that there were external observers on some occasions who gave Chris feedback on the performance but although each performance was very competent and effective, there were one or two occasions when I felt that if he was doing two stories in rotation, rather than the same one, the story would have been more alive.

Women in stories. Worth considering as more rounded characters rather than stereotypes (fluffy mother; giggly, eyelash fluttering maiden; witchy witch.)

I always sat at the back of the hall and if the general acoustic was good and there was no outside noise Chris could be heard clearly. However, on one or two occasions it was a little more difficult to hear, and when this was pointed out, Chris rectified it.

In one school, contrary to what was requested, Reception class was brought in to watch the performance. In my opinion, this was a mistake because the children were too young for that story and to sit for one hour, and their comments and distractedness distracted some of the other children.

As I wrote above, devoting all energy to the performance rather than the exhibition as well made for a generally better performance.

When debriefing the classes and generally talking to the children and adults I found that most were very positive about the day. They were captivated by the story and had followed it in detail. I had the sense that even older children and adults did not feel patronised, restricted or bored in any way. On the contrary, everyone was able to participate with the story on his or her own level. This is one of the supreme strengths of a traditional tale in the hands of a competent teller.

e. Summary of Key Issue for Performance

Feedback was generally very positive from all sources. Issues for further consideration include:

- Use of imagination interactions with audience
- Shorter vs. longer stories
- Characterisation
- How to keep a story fresh
- Very positive effect of music and song (Is it possible to always have a music component?)
- Use of props and pictures
- Use of seating
- How to empower teachers to tell stories

3.5.3 Exhibition

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a. Description

A typical schedule for setting up the exhibition was:

- 8.00 Arrive at school
- 8.00-9.00 Unload, assemble and set out exhibits around the edge of the hall
- 9.15-10.30 Performance
- 10.30-11.00 Complete set-up
- 11.00-11.30 Class 1 (welcome, supervise and debrief)
- 11.30-12.00 Class 2
- 1.30-2.00 Class 3
- 2.00-2.30 Class 4
- 2.30-3.00 Class 5
- 3.00-4.15 Pack up
- 4.30 Depart

This meant that in most schools 5 classes or sometimes 6 (150-180 children) were able to visit the exhibition in one day. In most of the schools CS worked alone at all the tasks – in 5 schools VG was able to help with setting up and working with the students as they arrived, taking some pressure of CS. However, overall, the schedule was exhausting and not sustainable for one individual.

Recommendation – recruit assistant curator to manage exhibition part of the storydays with storytelling only for performers. This will require creating a storage area for the exhibition materials.

The exhibition was almost double the size of the previous Minotaur scheme, featuring:

- 15 A1 frames images
- 25 objects
- 8 sounds (headphones and mp3)
- 2 interactive pictures (write down your idea)
- 7 different smells.

Each exhibit had two cards: one in red with a sentence describing the moment in the story represented by the exhibit; the other in blue providing information and suggested questions to think about.

Children and teachers generally thought the cards worked very well for those who could read them, providing strong motivation to read (teachers liked that) and giving students ideas about ways to relate to the exhibit (children liked this, especially where they were invited to imagine). Some children liked the idea of having push-button talking exhibits for those who could not read or didn't like reading.

Recommendation – keep the same labelling scheme for future exhibitions of this kind

In addition a number of activity boxes were offered to teachers to use that day in follow up work in the classroom. These were:

- hats, masks and wigs for dressing up and role play
- puppets for role play
- 3 small table drums for drum practice, with instructions
- headscarves with instructions on how to tie
- Arabic writing practice

(Story games involving ordering words and sentences on magnetic boards were tried but discontinued as the magnetic words got lost and muddled up too quickly.

Recommendation – design same more robust games of the same kind

Teachers were provided with information about 6 weeks in advance about the exhibition (see annex 2) and most said they had received it. The activity boxes scheme was a new development and was simply announced on the day, so there was no advance planning time. Some schools planned a rota on the spot. Some took all the boxes for an hour each; others rotated individual boxes during the day. A few schools did not use them at all.

Recommendation- add activity box details to advance email together with suggested ways of using them.

Mostly the visitors to the exhibition were years 1-7, although in one school reception children visited in groups of 3 and 4 with an adult to explain the exhibits (which worked fine). Usually groups visited the exhibits in the narrative sequence, and then revisited favourite things again if they had time. There was enormous variety in the speed of completion. Some students went round first in 5 minutes; others took an hour. Some were given activities by the teacher (sketch a favourite object; choose a favourite moment) but usually the teachers were happy to let the children explore in their own way. This freedom in exploration was one of the things highly valued by the children who often experienced the exhibition as play rather than 'learning'.

As for the performance, feedback on the exhibition was collected by exit interviews with classes, self administered questionnaires by teachers, and by the reports of 5 observer/evaluators. The results are summarised below and available in full in annex 5.

b. Student Feedback about Exhibition

At the end of their visit to the exhibition, the classes were asked to rate their enjoyment of the exhibition on a scale of one to ten. The ratings are shown below, with 81% of children awarding either 9 or 10 out of ten.

How much did you enjoy the exhibition?

Score	Number of children
1	2
2	2
3	0
4	4
5	15
6	17
7	39
8	88
9	188
10	532

Total	887

When asked what they enjoyed, younger children (years 1-3) tended to identify favourite exhibits. Most popular were:

- DVD of the horse running
- The bow and arrow (to play with)
- The music (to listen to)
- The witch's finger (interesting hologram and scary latex model)
- The witches smell (shocking)
- The whole section about Islam (especially for Muslim children)
- Writing own dares
- The rubber snakes (to play with and remember the dream)

In general many children liked the fact that the exhibition was interactive and called on the senses of smell, touch and hearing.

When younger children (years 1-3) asked how the exhibition could be improved the following were common suggestions:

- To be able to taste things e.g. the honey
- Add more music
- More exhibits
- A larger board for writing down dares
- A real bow and arrow (it was a cheap plastic one)
- A longer DVD with more images of horses
- Some smells were too overpowering
- Something to represent the story going on for ever

Older children (yrs 4-7) were more able to describe the way they enjoyed the exhibition. Most frequent responses included:

- The boards on which they could write and draw
- The smells and other interactive aspects
- The nice arrangement of the exhibits
- The paintings – one child said it changed the way she imagined the story

The following suggestions were often made for improvement:

- More time to look around
- More smells to guess
- Some sounds to guess
- A quiz to fill in as you go around the exhibition
- An opportunity to make an audio recording of yourself and hear it back
- Costumes to dress up in
- More space on the writing boards
- An exhibit to represent the Path of Trouble
- A translation of the Arabic writing
- Things to taste
- Making their own exhibition

Below are a selection of comments from the comments book at the end of the exhibition:

Selections From Comments Book

"Really enjoyable. The interactive things such as drawing the good and bad things [on the Path of Trouble] could have been improved (more space to draw, better pens). It could also have been more of a walkthrough. But over all it is classy."

Dan (age 12)

"I really enjoyed the smells and the videos (which you could have more of). I liked how you had options of smells with the fruit. To make it better you could have had more physical things to do! Also if the storyteller would have had more interactions with everyone else. It was really good!"

Felicity (age 11)

"I really liked it, I learnt a lot. The horse video was brilliant coz' it made me think what it would be like to gallop off across sandy plains."

Jessie (age 11)

"I liked it because there were lots of things to do and different smells and sounds."

Christian (age 10)

"It was really good but you could add more things."

Rosie (age 9)

"I loved it, thanks."

Michael (age 8)

"It was funny."

Abbie (age 7)

<p>Photo removed.</p> <p>Photographic permission only available for internal reference and not for public viewing.</p>	<p>Photo removed.</p> <p>Photographic permission only available for internal reference and not for public viewing.</p>
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c. External Observer Feedback

The following are excerpts from the observers' reports, relevant to the exhibition

Adam Guillain
(Author and Creative Writing Workshop Leader)

Magnificent! It's multi-sensory, interactive, uses up-to-date technology and really key to getting us inside the story and the culture.

Suggestion: While the exhibition is itself a story map, I would love to see one. It could be made interactive by having the key pictures attached by Velcro so that the sequencing could be jumbled and the children would have to re-build it like a puzzle. You could also colour code functions like dilemmas and curses..... (Details explained)

My preference would be to let the children start anywhere they liked in the exhibition with a view to moving clockwise and ending up where they started (although 2 children said specifically they wanted to go backwards). This would have stopped the need for a staggered start. This was my instinctive reaction, but I heard this very point raised by a year 6 boy and Sandra – so it might be worth trying.

The boxes and classroom observations –

In the classrooms, the children were all highly motivated by the stimuli inside the boxes. The mid-infants felt they were a box short so one table produced wonderful pictures of characters from the story – an ideal starting point for character webs. Children of all ages loved playing with the puppets and I saw a whole class sharing time in lower KS2 where children performed sections of the story using them. I saw performances between characters in masks in this session too which were wonderful. The powerful issue here was that the 'less able' children were getting a chance to shine in literacy.

I thought the activity sheet for follow-up work was excellent and Sandra thought even the poorest of teachers could find something in there that they could latch on to. It's impossible to find fault with anything, but the main areas I would look to develop are

- *Empowering the children and teachers to see themselves as storytellers....*
- *Inset – the whole day works as an inset for teachers who could quite simply join a school-based session and observe all that goes on ...*

Amelia Foster
Roald Dahl Museum Director

Children needed lots of guiding to interact properly with the exhibition – they found the writing and drawing activities easiest to engage with, perhaps because those are the most familiar in a school setting.

Planning for a little more time with the exhibition may help – I think the children needed more time to get over their inhibitions about touching things and really exploring all the exhibition had to offer. The other issue is space – obviously the hall is needed for dinner, but the exhibition perhaps loses some of its magic when it's all cleared away to one corner.

Possibly more input in the interim activities is needed. In the Year 2 class I visited, the teacher helped the children to recall the story – obviously a useful activity. However, given that you had provided some great activities for them to have a go at, I felt this could have been a shorter activity or the use of the resources you provided more carefully planned by the school.

In a story with lots of characters it can be difficult to follow – a list of characters may help (this was a suggestion by a teaching assistant).

Tony Eade
(Educationalist and Ex-Head teacher)

...The exhibition was set up efficiently, safely and interestingly in the school hall. One teacher and one child, separately, commented that, although they had preferred the previous story, the exhibition was better this time. While I did not see the previous exhibition, it seemed that this one was much improved. The general setting up and organisational aspects of the day worked very well, with the various boxes, stands etc enabling a fairly speedy putting up and taking down of the exhibits. While I think that one person could, if need be, lead such a day on his or her own, as a one-off, two people are required for this to be sustained.

...Each class was given a short verbal introduction to guide them what to do, with three areas, one on Islam and Iraq, one with artefacts illustrating, and with excerpts from, sections of the story and one with more general items of interest. The books and items on Islam, and the pictures other than those related to the story, attracted least attention and interest; and the 'stations' where children could draw or write and/or engage in an activity most. The multi-sensory aspect of the exhibition is excellent. I do not think that more exhibits are needed and probably the number could be reduced somewhat.

...The response of the classes was surprisingly different, with the oldest two classes being more involved and dwelling on individual items for considerably longer than the younger ones. Two of the younger classes seemed quite tentative. The teacher's approach seemed important in setting the tone for how children went round and interacted with the exhibits. Adults may, paradoxically, need to give some quite definite suggestions to children about being creative and adventurous, while letting them move around and respond fairly much as the child wishes; and that the storyteller can do that if the teacher is being restrictive. The presence of one or two parents or members of the support staff for all or part of the day could be valuable, if possible. My sense was that, while children have to start at different points, it is not important

that they follow any particular route and that a message that they can visit the exhibits in any order could be useful.

.....Chris had brought in five boxes of different items such as masks and drums for teachers to use with their classes. These were only mentioned after the end of the story, so it appeared that preliminary material had not mentioned these. Only one had been taken by lunchtime. Towards the end of the afternoon, I went briefly to see one class using two boxes, one of masks in a fairly free way, one of drums with adult supervision in a small group. I did not get long to make much of a judgment on how they were used but it looked good. These seem to have a good deal of potential to encourage and enable children/teachers to follow up the work in a variety of ways.

Vergine Gulbenkian (Storyteller)

Strengths

...The exhibition was an exciting new experience for the children. I had the sense that few children followed the order in which the exhibits were laid out if left to their own devices which makes me wonder if the order is necessary. Children were drawn to particular exhibits and their particular choices, and interests, varied greatly. I think that the suggestion by some teachers of a slightly different exhibition for younger children is a good one. Years 1-3 did not read much of the writing on the exhibits and preferred role-play exhibits. The older children generally would have liked more time and more space to really interact with and engage with some of the exhibits....

On the whole I think that a story day once a year is a positive, inspiring experience for the whole school....

Improvements

My main reservation is with the representation of elements of the story, rather than suggestion. If one of the strengths of storytelling is to draw on our own images then showing a representation of e.g. the three maidens, and the witch, detracts from this process. Even with experience of stories I find it hard not to replace my own image with this artificially imposed representation – against my will.....

Because of the interactive nature of exhibition, the exhibits, of course, need to be resilient and replaceable. However, I think even the youngest or most insensitive children respond to the quality of materials so I would choose robust, well-made, natural materials rather than mock-ups. E.g. a wooden bow and arrow – or just a real longbow without a arrow if there is a safety issue; Real fruits; snake-skin;

The exhibition needs constant maintenance. Apart from the obvious replacing of batteries etc., some exhibits were decidedly dog-eared and scruffy and needed attention.

3.5.3 Teacher Feedback on the Overall Day

The teacher questionnaire requested information on the day with the questions below:

<i>Teacher Questionnaire</i>					
<i>How well did we help children to:</i>					
<i>(1=poor; 5 = excellent – circle number)</i>					
<i>1. Enjoy and understand the performance art form</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>2. Develop a heightened sense of imagination and narrative</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>3. Develop enthusiasm which can be harnessed by the teacher</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>4. Have an enjoyable and interesting experience connected to Arab and Islamic Culture</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Do you think storydays of this kind are useful in other ways? Explain?</i>					
<i>How could future storydays be improved?</i>					
<i>Were the activities inclusive of all abilities? Did you notice any children who particularly benefited?</i>					
<i>What follow up work are you planning if any?</i>					
<i>If you also attended the Minotaur Storyday, how do the two compare?</i>					
<i>Any ideas for other kinds of school events you would like the story museum to run?</i>					

Twenty-nine teachers returned questionnaires. The results of the first question are totalled and averaged in the chart below:

How much did we help children to:

	1	2	3	4	5	Average
<i>Enjoy and understand a performance art form</i>	1		1	7	21	4.7
<i>Develop a heightened sense of imagination and narrative</i>		1	1	5	22	4.7
<i>Develop enthusiasm which can be harnessed by the teacher</i>		2	1	5	19	4.2
<i>Have an enjoyable experience connected with Arab and Islamic culture.</i>	1		2	9	17	4.4

Almost all teachers scored 4 or 5 suggesting a high level of appreciation of the storyday in meeting these four aims. Teachers also listed a range of other ways in which the story day was useful.

For example:

"After the previous visit, the children's writing improved. We all learnt to speak and tell our story first before writing. It worked for non-fiction writing too."

"Very beneficial for cross-curricular activities e.g. using music to create mood within stories." Three other teachers also pointed out the cross curricular usefulness of the storyday.

"Helps children create their own images instead of being fed them all the time with film/t.v."

"Developing thinking skills in children."

When asked how to improve storydays, the following suggestions were made more than once:

- Give each class more time to view the exhibition.
- Give more time to prepare – a term in advance.
- Separate days and adapted exhibitions for Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Two tellers or one storyteller and one musician.
- Arabic writing workshop.
- A quiz for the exhibition.
- The whole school comes together at the end of the day to show what they have been working on.

Nearly all the teachers commented on the inclusiveness of the storyday and how it sometimes unexpectedly caught the interest and imagination of children of all abilities.

"Non-writing boys were particularly involved." Year 1/2 teacher

"Boys particularly benefited because of the practical nature of the museum."

"All children benefit from the multi-sensory approach."

"Kept the children with Asperger's completely engaged and focussed."

"This inspired children who are normally uninvolved."

Follow up plans included:

- Soundscapes from scenes in Music
- The prince's view from the top of the tree in Art
- Drama
- Story writing
- Poetry
- Writing persuasive adverts for the witch's make-over
- Storytelling

Suggestions for other Story Museum activities in schools included:

- Stories that promote mathematical thinking to inspire those who believe "maths is difficult".
- Storytellers to work with one class at a time to develop their storywriting.
- Storytelling where children are part of the telling.

- Stories linked to school topics e.g. Romans in Y4, India in Y5.
- Other multi-cultural themes.
- Year group bonding/pastoral events.
- Take one story e.g. Cinderella and compare how they are found in all cultures.
- Fables.
- Giving ideas to teachers to develop their own museums.

3.6 Case Study – Sibford Gower School creates their own story museum

Following our visit to Sibford, their class teacher (Vicki Fletcher) decided to work with her class for a few weeks on creating their own story museum. They chose *The Iron Man* (Ted Hughes) and worked as follows.

First the class worked on reading and having read the story the overall idea was clear in their mind. Then a series of brainstorming sessions were run suggesting key moments and how they might be represented in a story museum format. The teacher then helped choose feasible ideas and they worked every day for a couple of weeks trying things out, making things and bringing objects from home. The pieces were then assembled into a narrative walk and other classes in the school visited. The teacher and class were very enthusiastic about this project which engaged creativity and imagination, developed teamwork, and gave the children a deep sense of the story and how it works. The experience shows that exhibitions designed around books can be a success. Story museum team member Jo Freer visited the opening of the exhibition. See annex 6 for her account of the visit and some images of the exhibition.

3.7 Case Study: Edward Feild plans a comprehensive programme of work around the day.

Edward Feild (year 5/6) planned a three week programme of literacy and other creative work around the storyday visit and presented samples of the work to the Story Museum. The work included:

- cartoons and storyboards retelling a favourite scene from the story
- tank poems describing snapshots of a story moment
- descriptions of a journey along the road of suffering
- extracts of the story written as a play script
- use of Venn diagram to compare the Tree of Life with two other traditional tales
- written character portrait of the prince

The teacher was clear that the quality and enthusiasm for the work was directly a result of the kick start provided by the storyday.

3.8 Case Study – The Family Literacy Programme plans a course for parents around a storyday at St Leonard’s, Banbury.

The County Council Family Literacy programme trialled the idea of running one of their basic literacy trainings around the storyday event. They advertised and recruited 8 parents and grandparents of children at the school with basic literacy skills (no GCSE maths or English grade c or above) and ran a series of six two hourly sessions (the weekly schedule is shown below).

Session	Adult only activity	Joint activity
1 13 th June	How do we learn? Learning styles quiz. Discussion of own literacy skills needs – informal assessment. Background to the Story museum. Go through summary of story to be told in session 2.	None
2 20 th June	Discussion after the story What makes it work? How were the children involved? What learning styles did they use? Explanation of story museum relating to the story.	Listen to the story with the children as Chris Smith (Story Museum) tells it. Go round the story museum with their child.
3 27 th June	Re-cap and feedback on activities in story museum. Discuss and categorize activities linking with learning style. Contrast and compare story sacks and story museum (If parents have experiences of story sacks).	Choose another story to share and make a story museum for (either in family pairs, a small group or the whole group) share story and start to plan museum items.
4 4 th July	Look at how stories give wide experiences of different emotions, cultures etc. Fiction and non-fiction texts.	Continue making items for the story museum.
5 11 th July	Analyse what makes language exciting. Sentence construction, adjectives.	Complete making the story museum.
6 18 th July	Discussion on what next? Evaluation.	Share story with rest of class, set up the story museum and invite classmates to “visit” Evaluate.

The project coordinator was extremely enthusiastic about the partnership and felt that the storyday had a valuable teaching focus and helped the parents support their children in working with the story.

3.9 Summary of Key Issues

All sources of feedback validated this model as an effective way to inspire children about story. The expert observers raised a number of issues and proposals which need incorporation into future plans of the storydays, including:

- representation of characters in story (when useful, when not?)*
- can the day work as Inset?*
- should we add storymap exercises?*
- how to increase level of planning around the day by teachers.*
- how to empower teachers and children to be storytellers.*
- how to incorporate the wealth of teaching ideas into Inset and written resources for teachers.*
- how to extend cooperation with programmes like family literacy.*

4. Networking, Discussion and Future Planning

4.1 Introduction

As well as the residency and storyday pilot, the project provided time for networking with other organisations and a chance to think through and set out our plans for the future of the school's part of the Story Museum. In this section there is a brief description of the networking visits and then two consultation papers which we are currently using, both internally and externally, to refine our vision and strategy. One examines the future direction of the School Story Service, and the second looks at planning and evaluation principles.

4.2 Networking

One of the aims of the project was to enable the storyteller to network with other organisations working in the same field, in order to (a) learn from others about the process of setting up and sustaining their institution (b) create personal relationships and possibilities for cooperation between organisations.

To this end the following organisations were visited for one day each:

Roald Dahl Museum and Story Centre
Henley Museum of Rowing (including *Wind in the Willows*)
Discover (Stratford, London)
Seven Stories (Newcastle)
Mythstories (Wen)

This provided a rich and stimulating experience of a range of very varied organisations interested in promoting story in one sense or another. In particular,

1. Observing the way different institutions approached story-related design and interactive installations of various kinds, was extremely useful, helping understand the range of approaches adopted by various institutions, and also collect information and tips on the process of design and maintenance. Many of these lessons are relevant for the design of outreach exhibitions for schools and others, as well as for the future museum itself.
2. All the institutions told their stories of how they came into being and the challenges now faced in sustaining their work. What was particularly striking about the main organisations visited was that only a proportion of their income was earned through fees from users. Main income came either from grants or endowments.
3. Organisations were particularly thoughtful about the costs of maintaining expensive technology, and advised thinking carefully about these costs before investing in the high tech end of exhibitions.

4. It was valuable to look at the outreach models of the various institutions and note the pre-dominance of a kind of artist in residence project where artists work with individual classes in various ways.
5. In Stratford (London) we learned that some story-related museums across Europe are built in areas of relative deprivation, as part of community regeneration initiatives.
6. Mythstories proves an example of a low budget institution, run on a relative shoestring, with simple objects and artistic reactions arranged to promote questioning and enquiry. The atmosphere is very homely and warm – in a way it feels like a story home.
7. The *Wind in the Willows* exhibition at Henley was interesting as an example of a walk through narrative where the story fragments are literally represented in 3D models (with lighting and two scenting effects). The visitor walks around the set while listening to the story on a headset. This prompted a question also raised by VG in her discussion of the literal models in the Tree of Life exhibition – what do literal representations do to our imagined images? Furthermore, is the effect the same for adults and children? In the context of the *Wind in the Willows*, if the story is just read or heard then the listener/reader will create their own inner images, but with a literal installation how can the imagination be engaged and inspired? On the other hand, does it matter – perhaps visitors will be prompted to buy a book and tape and then read or listen later?
8. In all cases, given the ambition to inspire about story and the imagination, I was struck by relative weakness, or indeed absence of thinking about learning through evaluation. Several managers said that once their organisation was up and running it proved very difficult to find the time and energy for evaluation as well as to keep up with all the other things that had to be done.
9. The staff size and therefore costs of these institutions was also noteworthy with teams of 10-20 or more running the service which might serve 200 or so a day (myth stories the notable exception with a staff of 2) with unit costs around £10 plus per visit.

In addition there were a series of shorter meetings with Oxford based organisations to explore cooperation and coordination possibilities in various ways.

4.3 School Story Service – Draft Discussion Paper on 2007-2009 Strategy

a. Introduction

Since its launch in June 2005 the Story Museum has implemented an extensive programme of community outreach to school, museums, family centres, theatres and other community setting. Several thousand children and families countywide have experienced one of more Story Museum events designed to inspire about story and books. The programme thus far has been run with two part time staff (administration and fundraising), short term project grants, and a lot of voluntary assistance. Through

this programme the Story Museum has demonstrated its capacity to implement high quality, successful programmes and develop new innovations to engage and inspire children.

The purpose of this paper is to take stock of this experience and set out ideas for the future direction of the schools part of the Story Museum programme. It is intended primarily as an internal document for review by the Story Museum team and board, and by other stakeholders with whom we wish to consult.

The paper is made possible as part of an Arts Council grant which supported:

- (a) a pilot storyday to 15 schools;
- (b) a residency in an Oxford City school;
- (c) visits to a number of UK institutions with similar aims or activities to learn about other programmes, to help with planning and establish peer connections and
- (d) time to reflect and review the SSS strategy in order to plan for the next few years.

b. Experience so Far

The main School Story Service activity so far has been the development and implementation of two "Story Museum Storydays" in a total of 42 schools county-wide to a total of around 8,000 children. The Storydays mix a one hour story performance with an exhibition where exhibits are sequenced to follow the story narrative. The visitor literally walks through the story a second time using sight, smell, hearing and touch, experiencing a diversity of stimuli including music, natural sounds, perfumes and oils, photos, paintings, and various kinds of objects and with a number of different kinds of interaction with the exhibits.

All reviews and feedback from children, teachers, head teachers and outside experts have validated this model as an effective way of engaging and inspiring children about story – and in particular as a way of reaching out to those who are not so easily engaged. Perhaps most promising was the eager rebooking of the second storyday by schools who had experienced the first at a second-time rate of £300 per storyday. The true cost of these storydays was estimated at around £500/day (or about £3.30 per child attending the exhibition; £2.20 per child attending the performance)

In addition we implemented one 6 day residency in a school in a deprived area of Oxford in order to learn more about children's preferences around types of story and ways of learning about story; providing a great deal of background information for our future planning.

The whole programme so far was implemented by a single person with support from an assistant or volunteers on occasional days. However a programme of this kind cannot be sustained in this way (too exhausting): if the Story Museum wishes to continue a service of this kind it needs to be planned with a more realistic and sustainable workload.

The storyday experience was valued by teachers and children for several different reasons:

- Inspirational – children and teachers love it!

- Inexpensive – at around £3 per child it is relatively inexpensive compared with trips out of school (the bus alone often costs more).
- Rich experience – the mixture of performance, multi-sensory exhibits, classroom materials and follow up activities provides a powerful potential platform for learning and teaching.
- Quality performance – the level of engagement and absorption achieved by quality performance storytelling was highly valued.

In short, the model has proved very effective in achieving the Story Museum's core aim of inspiring story, and in particular engaging those who are not so easily engaged by other methods. We have not come across any examples of this model being implemented before in this way: it can be considered a unique feature of the Story Museum's work.

c. Should such a programme form part of the Story Museum's permanent programme?

Arguments in favour include:

- **high volume impact** – reaching 250 children a day at a tiny fraction of the cost of a permanent facility (or a visit to a permanent facility); a programme of 100 days/year could reach 20,000 children or more.
- **viable** – at least 60% cost recovery from the schools with the remainder from grants looks feasible, especially in areas of highest need in the county.
- **inclusive** – story days reach children who might not come to the museum, and are inclusive of children within the school who have trouble engaging with other story work.
- **integrated** – can link to teaching practice both around the visit and with associated Insets to offer new tools for teachers.

In addition the programme offers an invaluable way of testing out ideas in advance before incorporating them into a future museum feature. It creates a cadre of performers and designers associated with the Museum who have extensive experience of working with children and watching children interact with exhibits.

However, the development of the storydays into a sustainable programme has a number of important implications. It would need a permanent structure of employees and freelancers plus a storage and maintenance facility. Developing and managing this would require considerable energy and effort and could potentially distract the core team from the main task of developing the city centre museum. Conversely, other organisations tell us that they have found it difficult to think about outreach while setting up and then trying to sustain their new centres.

We could avoid this problem if we were able to properly establish our schools programme now and ensure that we had adequate and secure funding so it could be properly managed and implemented.

d. Would such a program form part of the Story Museum's work if a permanent Story Museum is not built in Oxford City?

There is no practical reason why a Story Museum outreach programme could not be sustained without a major central facility. By creating the system now, with a viable funding scheme, it means that if the central museum plan changes, there is still a programme for the children of the County which can be sustained long term – and so a lasting legacy for all the energy and support behind the current museum plan.

e. What might a future SSS programme look like?

There are three main ways in which the Story Museum can serve and support schools.

First, we can act as a **hallmark of quality**, a brand that becomes known and trusted. There are many storyteller and theatre groups available for schools, to do performances and run workshops, and many writers available for creative activities. There is no need for us to duplicate existing provision. However it is difficult for schools to judge the quality of what is available except by word-of-mouth. Schools would welcome some help in this area.

Second, we can be a **centre for innovation and excellence**. By bringing together performers, designers and educationalists the School Story Service team would be in a good position to develop other new innovative ideas for schools – some which could be provided by the Story Museum, and others which could be tools to be used by teachers, parents or children themselves.

And lastly we can offer a **programme of story-related experiences** which stimulate children, teachers and parents and support the curriculum. This would include a variety of formats:

- performance plus exhibition
- exhibition without performance
- performance without exhibition
- workshops only
- teacher training

Performance-with-exhibitions would include the tested formula of performance followed by a narrative walk (i.e. the current storyday model), but we would also try out other ways of combining art forms: for example puppets, actors or musicians for the performance part of the day. Exhibitions do not have to always follow the same narrative thread. They could also involve more exploration of story context; more story making; or more artistic responses to the story (sculpture, painting, music and so forth). Collaboration with arts organisations like OVADA should be considered in this regard.

Exhibition-without-performance has the advantage that without the performer the storyday can become much cheaper, and may stay with the school for more than one day. Some exhibitions could be delivered by courier without the need for staff at all in the field. In addition they would provide valuable testing for the permanent museum – where one would expect many exhibitions to work without a performer.

Formats could include:

- Schemes where the visitor listens to a narrative or commentary as they walk around the exhibition. These can be sound only or multimedia with images shown on the hand held device (as used for example by the Tate Modern).
- Schemes where the exhibition tells the story through writing and exhibits themselves.
- Schemes where the visitors have already studied the story in class or read it (as in, for example, the Iron Man exhibition created by Year 3 and 4 at Sibford Gower School).
- Schemes where the visitor reads or has read a text as they go round the exhibits.

Performance-without-exhibition has the advantage of logistic simplicity. Without the need for storage and maintenance of exhibits and equipment, performers could develop their shows and simply turn up for bookings, with supporting resource materials. It is clear from the pilot study that good storytelling is highly valued in the schools. Storytellers could also offer say two performances in the day - one for KS1 and one for KS2 - thus including the whole school and so solving the problem of exclusion of the very young (reception and year one) from most whole school performances. A whole school event could be delivered for say £300 which would be around £1.20 per student: it should be possible to fully recover the running costs of such a programme.

Workshops only (single class work) again have the advantage of logistic simplicity and meet the need for more intimate connections between artists and classes. One teacher thought that one hour visits to her class to tell a story in some ways were better than the whole school tellings. Workshops also allow artists to demonstrate new story-related techniques which may then be adopted by the teacher. Residencies involving multiple visits also falls into this category with the same advantages, plus the benefit of a more in-depth experience all round.

Teacher training events perhaps have the greatest capacity to influence the way children experience story by equipping teachers with tools to better inspire their classes. Again this service is much more straightforward than working with exhibitions, but would challenge the museum to assemble a portfolio of approaches, techniques and trainers which could meet the needs of teachers and schools. Within this area the idea of schemes to develop teacher's storytelling skills stands out as a priority: many teachers – especially the younger ones – expressed the wish to be better storytellers, as they imagined how this would engage and inspire their class. Given the busy and complex lives of teachers it will be a challenge to elaborate a scheme which will be workable for them.

f. Staffing Functions

Developing such a programme needs continuity: core funding over three years would enable recruitment and retention of these key staff needed to develop and sustain such a programme. The SSS could entail the following functions:

1. Director: overall planning, supervision and representation (pt).
2. Exhibitions Curator: management of exhibition materials including storage, maintenance, transport, setting up and supervision in schools (ft).

3. Marketing and Admin: liaison with schools; production of marketing materials and resources (could be part of post 2 in first instance).
4. Performance Team: group of storytellers and other performing artists tasked with the development and delivery of performance elements of the School Story Service, plus input into team 5.
5. Exhibition Design Team: group of artist, educationalists and designers charged with designing and creating the exhibitions and supporting resource materials.

Already the Museum has the beginnings of a team with two of the top national storytellers (Vergine Gulbenkian and Katy Caukwell) agreeing to join a performance team. We have the beginnings of an exhibition team with prop-maker Kay Sentence agreeing to continue with the project.

g. Marketing Strategy

Experience from the pilot has suggested that a simple and effective marketing strategy can be through school 'clusters' as follows:

- initial demonstration day with a school from the cluster.
- follow up meeting with cluster heads by attending one of their periodic meetings.
- implementation of storyday in all school in cluster with INSET session for participating teachers.
- Subsequent re-booking of schools for new storydays by phone or repeat meeting with heads cluster.

The pilot has shown that, once confidence has been established, schools are generally willing to pay £300 for a storyday (although raising the price much above this might exclude some schools).

h. Story/Subject Strategy

In addition to continuing the Greek "Minotaur" show and the Arab and Islamic "Tree of Life" the School Story Service might develop a mix of storydays for which there is known to be demand. These could include:

- one or more storydays for KS1 (world stories)¹ with another set of world tales for KS2
- Romans storyday (Aeneas)
- Ancient Egypt (Isis)
- Something from Arthurian Legend (Lancelot, Gawain)

One option is to develop a storyday around the two Hugh Lupton books published by Barefoot, offering a total of 14 stories suitable for young children and excellent for performance. An accompanying exhibition could involve installations for some of the stories for role play and imagination, and well as simple narrative walks. The stories are available on audio through Barefoot as well as in writing, and Barefoot are generally encouraging about the idea. The same story set could be used to teach storytelling skills to older children and teachers perhaps by having the stories available on mp3 audio as a starting point for storytelling workshops.

- Gilgamesh (a story everyone should hear with fantastic exhibition possibilities)
- Indian storyday (Ramayana)
- African storyday
- Stories with multiple variants from various countries (Firebird, Cinderella)
- Oxfordshire Myths and Legends (perhaps including the story of Llud)
- Shakespeare days (Macbeth)

We should also explore ways of using literary stories in order to promote reading more directly in some of our story days.

Being in a position to offer a selection of storydays of this kind would enable us to work regularly with the same school every year, offering a different storyday each year until the school has a new cohort of pupils (every 6 or so years). Once this routine is established, marketing costs would be minimal.

At the same time it would enable a varied and challenging programme of performance for the storytellers and performers so that stories remain fresh.

i. Financing

For a notional programme of 100² storydays per year reaching 20,000 children/annum:

Earned Income@£350/storyday	£35,000
Recurrent Costs	
Director (part time):	£15,000
Exhibitions Curator (full time)	£20,000
Marketing (initially part of curator post)	
Performance Team: performance fees	£20,000
Storage and maintenance and misc. expenses	£5,000
Admin and overheads (10%)	£5,000
Total recurrent cost	£65,000
Subsidy needed for recurrent costs	£30,000 per year
Development Costs (from grant income)	
For each storyday including	
Design	
Creation of Exhibition	
Creation of Support Materials	
Testing and Revision	
Development of performance	
10% overhead	
	£10,000 per exhibition.

NB all fees estimated inclusive of transport expenses.

² 100 days is realistic for story days which need to be serviced by a single curator.

If we are to develop another 6 exhibitions over the next 3 years then we require:

Recurrent cost subsidy@30,000/year	£90,000
Development and origination costs for exhibitions@10,000/exhibition	£60,000
Total grant requirement	£150,000 over 3 years.

j. Next steps

The next step is to discuss these options further with our team and trustees, to develop an outline business plan and test it with a handful of potential funders. We know that we have the support and enthusiasm of many schools and the Local Authority but we also know that a sustainable programme will depend on additional funding.

After working in nearly 50 schools this year we have set our initial limit at 100 per year. However, there are 234 state primary schools in the county and a further 34 secondary schools. We will also need to decide whether we should focus on the areas of greatest need and whether we should cross-subsidise our programme by offering our service to private schools at a fuller price.

4.4 Draft Discussion Paper: Planning and Evaluation Framework for the Schools Story Service

There is a story about a seeker who climbed a mountain to see a sage. "What is truth?" he asks, and the sage points a finger at the moon. The seeker went away and pondered this for a few years, finally returning enthusiastically: "I've understood", he beamed, pointing to the finger. The sage shook his head and pointed to the moon a second time. Suddenly he whipped out a knife and cut the finger off. At that moment the seeker understood the sage's teaching.

a. Introduction

The Story Museum project has a general vision of creating a central facility and outreach programme which will inspire children about stories and books and celebrate the heritage of children's literature in Oxford. This will entail various kinds of activities going on in the building and out in the community. The initial vision was drafted early in 2004 and has been through a process of evolution and refinement as our experience grows.

b. Core Vision

In the Nov 2004 outline business plan "the story so far", the vision statement reads:

..The Story Museum will exist to inspire children about books and stories – fact and fiction, past and present, words and pictures. Its events and exhibitions, its online and outreach activities will have a common goal: to prompt children to pick up a book or create a story of their own...

In this document the argument for encouraging reading and creative writing is explained as:

1. *Literacy is vital to economic and personal success.*
2. *Children's literature plays an important role in encouraging children to read and in nurturing a creative culture.*
3. *Children's literature can help unite generations.*

Points one and two focus on the notion that reading and writing skills are important life skills: by improving levels of literacy peoples lives will be improved, and that the Story Museum will in some sense contribute to such improving.

Point three – the text emphasises the idea of books as a vehicle for disseminating ideas ...*" the Story Museum has a real role as an engine of social change"*

Three questions can be raised by the 2004 statement:

- (i) What do we mean by "inspire"?
- (ii) What do we mean by "stories"?
- (iii) What skill and behavioural outcomes are envisaged through this "inspiration" (or to put it another way – why are 1 and 2 important?)

(i) What do we mean by inspire?

Inspire: Fill with the urge or ability to do or feel something.

To inspire is to rouse, enthuse, stir and motivate in some general sense. A child may engage in an activity connected to story and be happy doing it at the time, without taking things any further. Our ambition must be to enthuse and motivate in such a way that a child is *more likely* to adopt new attitudes, skills and behaviours.

One way of thinking about this is to set out some notional steps between initial enthusiasm and any action. For example steps could include:

1. Liking an experience
2. Feeling confident about doing it
3. Determination to do it
4. Doing it
5. Continuing to do it

Our challenge is to understand how time-limited interventions such as an exhibition, performance or websites can contribute to children completing all five of the above steps.

(ii) What do we mean by stories?

Story: 1. an account of imaginary or real people and events told for entertainment.
2. an account of past events, experiences, etc

Stories make our world. Everything is part of a story of some kind. Everything can tell a story in the sense of creating a narrative with a beginning, middle and end. So it is important for us to be clear about what exactly we mean by 'stories'.

Personal

Most basically, stories are filters through which we create meaning about our world, and the vehicle through which we communicate our world to others. They define how we see ourselves, how we see others and how others see us. Where trauma or illness debilitates our capacity to create narratives, stories splinter into fragments which need to be 're-storied' for healing to occur. This realm of personal story is a basic requirement for human happiness and meaning. Many children struggle to create a story about themselves – sometimes, with early experience of being ignored, misheard or ridiculed – such storytelling becomes dangerous and frightening. Personal storytelling games couched in an atmosphere of safety and appreciation can help remake these stories. Capacity for empathy and intimacy require a sense of personal story.

Public

Communication skills in the public sphere (the ability to communicate an idea in an understandable narrative) are invaluable in the journey through life, whether telling a story to a group of friends or presenting an idea at school or in the workplace. Again good communication depends on an ability to tell and hear a narrative and its meaning. Whether describing an event in a football match or explaining the theory of relativity, we rely on the same basic sense of story.

Fiction

The made-up stories of others take us into a realm of imagined worlds where there are (usually) clear beginnings, middles and ends. In fiction we identify with new characters and dilemmas, taking ourselves outside our normal personal and public stories to a place of new possibilities and imagined realities. Some argue that fiction can be a kind of rehearsal for life, a vehicle for rehearsing alternative storylines which may have their resonance in personal storymaking.

Creativity

Imagining and communicating our own stories provides another way to access the fictional imagination, perhaps allowing deeper exploration of story themes relevant to the storyteller, with added possibility of being witnessed, affirmed and challenged through the telling to others. A creative imagination, where developed, can be a delightful and playful partner to take through life whether in work or play.

In all these four spheres there are a multitude of vehicles for communication story (speech, prose, poetry, drawing, painting, modelling, cartooning, dancing, enacting ...) and there is perhaps a danger of overemphasising reading and writing as the most important child development outcome related to story. Of course the two 'r' s are important – but functional illiteracy does not develop in a vacuum. It develops in contexts where early storytelling initiatives flounder through a sense of failure and ridicule: if no one wants to hear my story, why bother to tell it?

Nationwide we have seen recent emphasis on speaking, listening and empathy as a way to generate ideas that students wish to communicate. Our residency experience shows clearly the importance of appreciation and safety if children are to engage wholeheartedly in communication their stories.

Can the SSS embrace this broader vision of story, spanning a range of genres (personal, public, fiction and personal creativity) and through the various modes of expression? If the aim is to reach out to those most in need, then understanding these dimensions may be essential.

From the preceding we might slightly reframe the Story Museum's mission as:

To inspire children about stories so that they are more likely to adopt new story skills in their daily life.

This focuses our enquiry more specifically on some of the possible outcomes we want to help with, and gives us a dimension to add to all project designs about the way we envisage this happening (and how we can learn about it).

In particular it may give our project design an emphasis on scaffolding some kind of link between interactions with the SSS and the longer term support structures for the child (home, school, and friends).

(iii) What are the skills and behaviours we are concerned with?

Given the target age range (0-14) all outcomes will obviously work along a developmental scale of some kind (different for different ages). Also given that we are concerned with having an influence on child development we must be concerned with *changes* in attitudes, skills and behaviour attributable to our work. (i.e. – if a child comes to an event and then reads a book it doesn't show any effect in itself as the child might have read a book anyway without attending the event).

Key areas might include:

- reading
- writing
- speaking
- listening
- imagining
- confidence and appreciation
- enjoyment of story
- artistic expression of story
- attitudes to story

Returning to the previous five-stage notion of 'inspire' then – for occasional children a happy experience related to story may lead to some lasting change (i.e. action or repeated actions), however it is more likely – in schools and elsewhere – that a spike of happiness will not lead to any such changes by itself, without some kind of support from teachers, parents or friends. It follows from this that we should design our interventions specifically with the follow up support in mind. How can we support teachers and parents to 'follow on' from a Museum interaction? What resource sets can be devised and tested to help these helpers. How can we learn more about this?

Finally there is a key question of targeting – to what extent is our role to work with children who are most in need of support and who are perhaps least inspired about story; or do we look for areas where we can have the greatest impact. Do we want to inspire the relatively uninspired or increase the inspiration of those who already have it?