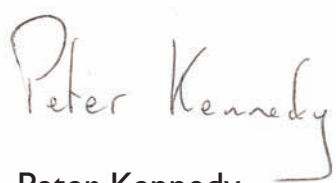


I find it hard to believe that a year has passed since my 2009 newsletter but time has flown and I have never been busier. It seems that more schools are embracing the findings of the Rose Report and its assertion that “play is not a trivial pursuit”.

Describing shared play and planned group activities as “the crucible for language development” is one thing but making it happen is another. Using drama and role-play to create compelling learning experiences is at the heart of my work and next academic year promises to be just as busy.

You are always welcome to email or phone if you wish to discuss ideas or ask for advice. I look forward to hearing from you.



Peter Kennedy

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Taking the Plunge

Pupils at Glebe Primary School dive into stories instead of experiencing literacy via drip-feed.

Through a creative partnerships project entitled ‘Never Ending Stories’ Year 6 and Year 3 pupils enjoy two-day narrative immersions in which they plunge into the worlds and the words of stories by exploring the language, the ideas, the themes and the characters through creative experiences. Pupils relish the challenge of thinking deep and talking long, answering and asking big questions about narrative. The Year 6 class have taken this one step further by devising and leading their own narrative immersion for parents.



Working in Partnership with Primary Schools

A long-term approach ensuring full staff engagement with drama methodology has paid dividends for many schools (such as the one praised by Ofsted, see right) by planning regular, focused visits across the entire academic year.



What OFSTED think

Ofsted continue to recognise the value and power of drama

“I wanted to share with you that the inspector stated that drama across school is a strength and that it has a real impact upon speech and language and their writing.”

Headteacher, Stockport



Wonderful Stories and Books for Drama

Here is a selection of my current favourite stories and books for drama. If you'd like some ideas on how to use any of these just let me know.

Early Years Foundation Stage

The Commotion in the Ocean – Giles Andreae/ David Wojtowycz
The Smartest Giant in Town – Julia Donaldson/ Alex Scheffler

Key Stage One

Where the Wild Things Are – Maurice Sendak
The Story of Frog Belly Rat Bone – Henry Basil Ering

Lower Key Stage Two

The Tunnel – Anthony Browne
The Lion and the Unicorn – Shirley Hughes

Upper Key Stage Two

Rose Blanche – Lawrence Ferlinghetti and Ian McEwan
The Savage – David Almond

Drama Consultancy for Secondary Specialists

Local authorities looking to support secondary drama specialists are bringing in external expertise.

Many authorities do not have the budget to support a full time, permanent drama consultant; as a result I am being asked to lead drama subject leader conferences or provide in school support for drama departments. I have worked as Stockport's independent drama consultant since 2003 and also led professional development for secondary drama teachers in Shropshire, Salford, Derbyshire and Halton.

Thinking Skills

The essentials for learning and life include 'learning and thinking skills' but how can these be developed?

That is the question being pursued at Greswell Primary School by Year 6 teacher John Cooper. Working collaboratively for a morning, we led a workshop with his class focusing on developing an open mind set. Through a sequence of structured games and group exercises pupils were challenged to work positively and collaboratively to achieve collective goals. The pupil session was followed by John and I reflecting on the learning and planning ways in which this work can be sustained.

The New Primary Curriculum

Understanding the Arts is a new area of learning.

One of the six areas of learning in the new primary curriculum is Understanding the Arts. The guide for parents and carers highlights the use of drama as both an art form in its own right and as a pedagogic tool.

"The arts are all about developing and applying creativity and imagination... and they can cut across to other subjects in exciting ways. Drama is a great example. It is a powerful arts subject that also enhances children's language development through role play in the early years. Theatrical work can enrich historical and religious studies as well as personal development and can help to build children's confidence."

Toys, Materials and Props

Busy Bee Toyshop is alive and well.

When I heard that my local toyshop was closing down, I wondered whether there was anything I could do to prevent this. Luckily, about a hundred others were thinking the same way and now we have Britain's first ever toy shop co-operative. If you are ever in Chorlton in South Manchester, then pop in to Busy Bee Toyshop on Wilbraham Road on Wilbraham Road or take a look at www.busybeetoyshop.co.uk

