

BRINGING LITERACY TO LIFE IN THE CLASSROOM

Exciting new KS2 courses develop and present core reading and writing skills

About the school

St Anne's Catholic Primary in Birkenhead, Merseyside, is a smaller than average, one-form entry school with 210 pupils on roll and an above national average number who are entitled to the pupil premium. The school's motto is 'Living and learning together in harmony with Christ'. It has an Ofsted rating of 'good' - having moved up from Requires Improvement in the last few years following the appointment of a new senior leadership team and the hard work and dedication of the whole school.

The challenge

As part of its School Improvement Plan, St Anne's was already placing an increased focus on reading in September 2017 when Deputy Head Teacher Catherine Cookson heard about Literacy Alive, a new KS2 literacy course from PET-Xi.

"It seemed as if it would fit in well with our plans," she explained. "Our English Lead Rachel Kelly had already asked each year group to turn their classroom door into a piece of art depicting their favourite book and Year Six had chosen Harry Potter. When I came across Literacy Alive and realised that it used Harry Potter and Dumbledore as the characters to help children recognise and use figurative language, which is a skill our children needed to develop, we decided it was the perfect fit."

The solution

The aim of Literacy Alive courses is to bring the core elements of reading and writing to life in the primary classroom, encompassing storytelling, role play, paired and group work, as well as individual study. It is led by a PET-Xi English expert, who is supported by two experts in motivational training and small group support dressed as favourite fictional characters to enthuse and motivate pupils.



Each Literacy Alive course option is fun and interactive and designed to enhance and embed the teaching of essential reading and writing skills. The PET-Xi team aim to thrill and excite learners through a carefully balanced mix of active learning, enjoyment and proven pedagogical principles. The lessons are dynamic and memorable - essential features in ensuring key learning is fully absorbed and retained - and help to develop and present core skills in an engaging way.



Caption: The PET-Xi Literacy Alive team, including 'Dumbledore' and 'Harry Potter' talk figurative language with pupils at St Anne's Catholic Primary School in Birkenhead.

The Harry Potter figurative language option included distinguishing factual description from figurative description; and the identification, creation and usage of similes, metaphors and personification.

"The children absolutely loved it," said Catherine. "We hadn't told them what was going to happen so they entered the classroom to see a table laden with prizes and then the characters appeared from where they had been hiding in the room.

"The costumes were fantastic, so good, and the whole event really captured the imagination of the children," said Catherine. "The session was really interactive, the children were up and moving and winning prizes; everyone was included and really engaged and excited about what was happening.

"It was great how the session was organised. Essentially the PET-Xi team broke down the role of the teacher into that of subject expert, motivator and supporter. There was lots of content and the children really learned a lot. There was a buzz around the entire school.

The results

"We were delighted to see that the children have been using much more figurative language in their writing ever since," continued Catherine.

"Our teachers were really positive too. Year 5 and Year 6 teachers sat in and observed and said that it was good to get some inspiration, tips and technique for their own CPD.

"It was helpful to sit back and watch, to see what the children can do, without being in amongst it all, and very interesting to watch their interactions with each other and with the other adults.

"By doing this in Year 6 it was also good preparation for transition to senior school where the children have to become used to lots of different teachers.

"I definitely recommend it as a really worthwhile session."

For more information on Literacy Alive please contact PET-xi.co.uk or call Lisa on 024764 20310

