LiteracyActionNet Awards 2014 for innovation by schools

The LiteracyActionNet Awards celebrate excellence and innovation by schools. A total of £2,000 prize money is being offered to the winning projects and initiatives. Entries are invited from all schools in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. Entries should demonstrate successful approaches in any one of or combination of the following categories:

1. Supporting children with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
2. Working with parents and families
3. Supporting children and young people through school transitions
4. Motivation, creativity and love of reading and writing
5. Teacher development and training to enhance literacy outcomes.

Entries will be judged based on criteria including:

1. **Originality** – the distinctiveness and memorability of the project idea
2. **Replicability** – how others could be inspired by and run similar projects themselves
3. **Reach** - the number of pupils involved in the project
4. **Diversity** - of pupils engaged, particularly those who have challenging needs
5. **Impact** – of the project (demonstrated qualitatively or quantitatively)

Timetable

- Deadline for entries – **Friday, 1st August 2014**
- Shortlist announced – **Friday, 12th September 2014**
- Winners announced – **October 2014**.

Rules and procedures

1. Entries must be completed using the LiteracyActionNet entry form and sent electronically via the ‘Submit entry form’ link on the **Awards page**.
2. Receipt of all entries submitted online will be automatically acknowledged.
3. Entrants may be asked to provide further information.
4. The judges' decision is final. Awards will be made at the judges' discretion and no correspondence will be entered into concerning any decision. Not all the awards advertised may
be awarded if the judges consider the criteria have not been met. Additional commendations may be made at the judges’ discretion.

5. The content of any entry may be used for informing other practitioners and also for publicity purposes unless the entrant withholds their consent to this in writing.

6. Entrants are deemed to have accepted these rules and procedures and to have agreed to be bound by them when entering this competition.

Your Entry

Please do not exceed 1500 words in total.

1. Name of the project you are entering for LiteracyActionNet Awards 2014 for innovation by schools

Food for Thought

2. Award category or categories you are entering

Supporting children with dyslexia and other specific learning difficulties
Working with parents and families
Supporting children and young people through school transitions
Motivation, creativity and love of reading and writing

3. Describe your project in one sentence

Using real world experiences around food – cooking, eating, researching - to make learning more inclusive and more effective.

4. Tell us about your school community

We are a small state secondary special school for students with complex needs. Many of our pupils
are on the autistic spectrum and most have speech and language difficulties. Literacy levels are generally low too.

We adapt provision to each cohort although we do also follow as much of the national curriculum as is appropriate. Cooking, forest schools and horse riding are just some of the extra activities that are students are able to access.

This year we have created an EU Comenius project and been joined by mainstream schools in Italy, Spain and Turkey and the subject – Food for Thought – has enabled students to take part in many activities and trips both at school and in our partner countries.

5. What are the project’s objectives?

To improve communication skills, raise literacy standards and develop life skills for students.

6. What are the project’s activities?

Students have prepared and cooked food on a weekly basis: often sharing a meal afterwards. This has included

- researching a variety of foods (traditional meals, celebrations, food from other generations and other countries etc) - improving speaking and listening and reading skills
- reading, writing and sharing recipes as well as interpreting them for preparing dishes.
- Reading and discovering food in literature and film.
- Working collaboratively on an event – eg breakfast and a picnic. This included planning together, with all students having a responsibility (such as looking up bus times for a picnic, making bread rolls for breakfast or interviewing chefs about the items they have cooked).
- Using a twinspace on the internet to communicate with other students.
- Creating food art including a huge multi media collage that every student has worked on.
- Learning about healthy eating and sharing ideas with our partners abroad and the families.
of the students.

- Preparing for functional skills and other English based qualifications using materials with a food theme.
- Working towards creating a Food for Thought book with our Comenius partners. All students will be expected to contribute something towards this cookery book, which we hope to publish.

7. What has been the impact / achievement of the project?

Students horizons have widened considerably – it has been noticeable that many of them try all sorts of foods they didn't before and they have enjoyed tasting and describing new foods.

Reading and interpreting recipes has proved a really effective way of enabling students to work out the important words and phrases. Their understanding of many texts has improved substantially. It has also been noticeable that some students are using a more expressive vocabulary as a result of the project.

Students have been motivated and interested in taking part in the project, particularly as they realise they may be travelling to another country and meeting students of their own age.

Food levels the playing field and for many students it takes away the fears they have when literacy skills are needed for work. Literacy is an under-cover set of skills that they have worked on without really realising!

8. How is your project evaluated?
We have regular meetings with staff from across the project (often on social media), when we are able to comment on and evaluate the impact we feel a particular activity has had.

Students are encouraged to give feedback during and after activities, and their views are taken into account for future planning.

The British council requires us to monitor and evaluate formally each year.

9. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?

I would spend the prize money on the following:

- enabling students to work in small groups on a project to be included in our cookbook. Eg: visiting a cheese maker, recording their thoughts and producing an article or recipe for the book.. Or researching how food is photographed for magazines and films and writing about it.

- A celebratory meal at the end of the project – with everyone contributing something.

Instructions for entry submission

1. Save the entry form to a location of your choice.

2. Once you have completed the form, click on the 'Submit entry form' link at the top of the Awards page. You will then be taken to the 'How to Return your entry form' page. You will be
asked to provide the name of your school and a one sentence summary of your project. To upload your entry form, press the 'Choose file' link in the third field.

3. After the three fields have been filled out, click 'Submit this entry now'. You will then receive an email confirming that we have received your entry.

4. You can send over any supporting materials separately. Please email them to: awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk. Please put the name of your school in the email subject line.

5. Please submit your entry no later than Friday, 1st August 2014.

6. If you have problems uploading your entry or would like to add documents, photos, videos or other media that are relevant to your entry, please email them to awards@lemosandcrane.co.uk quoting ‘LiteracyActionNet Awards’ and your school name in the subject heading.