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

Stories for Sharing - using pupil premium effectively

2. Award category or categories you are entering

4 - Motivation, creativity and love of reading and writing

2 - Working with parents and families

3. Describe your project in one sentence

Developing a love of reading through the engagement of parents and carers in an exciting and innovative project resulting in increased parental engagement and improved literacy standards.
4. **Tell us about your school community**

Our school currently has 280 pupils aged from three to eleven years of age, 45% of whom are eligible for pupil premium funding. We have been working hard to engage with and work in partnership with the families of our children (some of these families have not had good educational experiences themselves) to provide the highest standard of support and education we can. The school serves one of the more deprived areas of St. Austell town with many families being unemployed for several generations. Attainment on entry to our maintained nursery class is generally well below the expected level and attainment on entry to Reception is below expected levels. This shows the positive impact of the work our nursery does in addressing these levels prior to starting school.

We believe that to enhance the prospects for our pupils we must ensure they are articulate, well informed global citizens who leave our school ready for future challenges. The school has been working with a completely new senior management team over the last four years and we have successfully improved our Ofsted grading from satisfactory in September 2010 to good in October 2012 and are looking positively forward to our next inspection which we are confident will celebrate the continued drive to improve outcomes for all our children and their families.

5. **What are the project’s objectives?**

The project has two main objectives:

> to enhance the children’s experiences of reading with families at home

> to raise literacy levels by developing a love of reading

6. **What are the project’s activities?**
The project was designed to engage a range of parents and carers in the production of and the use of a range of story sacks.

The initial idea was launched to parents / carers at one of our termly Parent Forum meetings (these termly meetings were introduced four years ago to help breakdown barriers and build effective communication). The literacy subject leader had prepared a small number of story sacks to use to demonstrate the purpose and intentions of the project. Parents/ carers were invited to explore the ‘sack’ on their table and they discovered an attractive sack containing at least two books, one fiction and one non fiction, linked by a common theme. Also in the sack they could also find some games to play with their child, some toys / artefacts pertinent to the story, sometimes a DVD / CD or perhaps a puppet to encourage role play and story telling. It was a pleasure to see how engaged the parents were with these sacks and their recognition of the potential to use both in school during family reading time (a daily whole school event) and at home. There are also some multi-language books which have been particularly popular with the families for whom English is not their first language.

The literacy subject leader then asked for a team of helpers to produce the initial set of forty sacks. Her plea was extremely successful and the result was sixty sacks ready for the start of the new academic year. Parents helped in many ways through colouring and laminating resources, shopping at car boot sales and local shops for the ‘perfect’ items to go into the sacks, sewing to produce themed sacks, knitting (there are some beautifully made reversible dolls in the sacks) and generally sorting, labelling and preparing sacks for use.

All the sacks are displayed outside the reception classroom and children and parents scan them in and out using our normal library system. The sacks were designed to be used by all the children in reception and years 1 and 2 - a total of 120 children and their families.

One of the initial concerns from parents was about bits getting lost or broken and staff have been reassuring that if mini disasters happen through the sacks being well used then this is not a concern and replacements will be found.

Our school was asked to speak at an LA conference on the effective use of pupil premium and the feedback relating to this project was overwhelmingly positive and as a result other schools in Cornwall are going to explore the potential for developing their own set of sacks.

7. **What has been the impact / achievement of the project?**
The successes of this project continue to be revealed. Initial successes were in involving parents in the preparing of the sacks. This provided an excellent opportunity to engage with some of our more reluctant families and develop the trust and working relationship that impacts on all aspects of their experiences with school.

The enthusiasm of the children and positive feedback from parents who have used the sacks has been brilliant. One parent commented 'I didn't realise just how much can be learned from one story book'.

Children's love of reading and their progress in reading has been enhanced and this is a joy to see.

8. How is your project evaluated?

The project has been evaluated by the literacy subject leader and the senior management team (which includes the Chair of Governors) who have carried out informal conversations with children and their parents to assess the effectiveness of the project.

We anticipate seeing further improvement in the standards of reading achieved by the end of KS1 next year.

The biggest plus for us as a school has been seeing children and parents totally engrossed in their 'sack' and the shared excitement of seeing what's inside.

9. How would you spend the prize money to develop the project?
Our plans to develop this project further involve extending the range of sacks to provide a bespoke, varied set of sacks for our very youngest children in nursery. We will also share this good practice with our colleagues, from four other nursery schools, with whom we are currently working on a joint project exploring the possibility of providing 2 year old nursery places.

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.