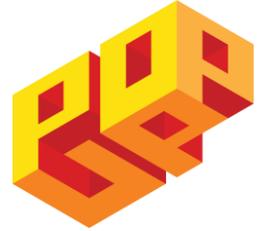




Bradfields SEND Academy Pop Up Festival Impact Case Study, 2015-18



www.pop-up.org.uk | www.bradfieldsacademy.co.uk

THE BACKGROUND

BRADFIELDS ACADEMY IS a special educational needs school in Chatham (Kent) for children with complex learning disabilities and difficulties including speech, language, emotional, sensory, physical and autistic spectrum disabilities.

They have 280 students, ages 4 to 19, in 27 classes, organised in 3 strands: A-Strand for high ability, B-Strand for lower ability and Blue Zone Strand for complex and varied needs. Across all strands, English is compulsory from year 7 to 14.

POP UP FESTIVAL IS a national children's literature festival for mainstream primaries and secondaries and SEND schools which connects thousands of children across the country with quality children's literature and its authors.

Pop Up Festival 'takes over' literacy and English every summer term across whole schools - replenishing libraries, engaging authors as writer role models, and empowering teachers to teach more creatively.

SPRING 2015

Bradfields Academy participate in a Pop Up Pilot with 2 classes

SUMMER 2016-18

Bradfields Academy participate in Pop Up Festival with all students annually.

83 WORKSHOPS

delivered by 10 authors, including Alexis Deacon and Sita Brahmachari.

540 BOOKS

supplied for students to work with and to replenish the library.

PAUL HAMLYN FOUNDATION supported 50% of Bradfields' participation in Pop Up Festival over three years with £11,500; the same amount was invested by the school itself.

MEDWAY WAS RANKED IN THE LOWEST 5TH for arts engagement (Active People Survey, 2010). This improved to lowest 3rd in 2017.

LOW LITERACY LEVELS were an issue identified by Ofsted, and Medway Council declared "the need to practise reading, writing and spoken English across the curriculum" a priority (2013).

HIGH LEVELS OF DEPRIVATION in Bradfields' local community: it is amongst the 20% most deprived in England. Looking at deprivation in the Education, Skills and Training domain, they are amongst the 10% most deprived (IMD 2015).

"Many of the pupils in our school are second generation Bradfields."

Head of English

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

“As an Academy we were also awarded the Kent Literacy Award 2016 for the Most Inclusive Development of Literacy across the Medway District; as well as three further awards in 2017.

This was in part due to our partnership with Pop Up.”

Headteacher

AT THE POINT OF SIGNING UP TO POP UP FESTIVAL, Bradfields had spent three years driving forwards literacy and developing home reading programmes.

They used Catch Up Literacy funding to invite storytellers and theatre practitioners, and organise weekly interventions. They also developed a school library.

In Autumn 2014 a new Head of English joined, also taking over the role of Pop Up coordinator.

INTERNAL INITIATIVES the school has implemented since 2015, under its new Head of English, to boost reading and writing skills through challenge and recognition, include:

Regular poetry and joint art and writing competitions

A weekly literacy focus and regular literacy challenges

Wednesday Wordless Books (school-wide cross-curricular story making)

Weekly assembly celebrations for competition winners

A PARENT EDUCATION CENTRE was launched in May 2018 at the Academy, developing out of weekly parent literacy workshops, to fight against generational literacy challenges by allowing parents - and other locals - to take free GCSE and A-Level classes. The cost for night classes would be prohibitive in many cases for parents of Bradfields students.

TWO EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS provide paid-for literacy services, besides Pop Up.

BUSTERS BOOK CLUB is a weekly reading competition, run by the charity arm of the KM Media group, to foster reading for pleasure.

Children record the amount of time they spend reading; schools compete against each other, and prizes such as storyteller visits or books are available.

BEANSTALK train volunteers to read with children; some are parents, most are retirees.

In 2015, Bradfields had one volunteer; by 2018 it was 19, delivering 102 one-to-one reading sessions per week, benefitting 51 students, targeted as lower achievers or for not having any reading support at home.

IMPACT ON ATTAINMENT

Bradfields have seen an impressive increase in reading and writing attainment across all abilities year-on-year since 2015. Pop Up Festival has been a significant contributing factor, as attested to by teachers and the Head. The below data is based on school's own termly assessments and standardised RSC testing, unless otherwise indicated.

“There has been a marked impact across the board in English, with reading and writing levels showing an outstanding rise. Although we have implemented many ideas to achieve this, there can be no doubt that Pop Up Festival played a fundamental part.”

Headteacher

OUTSTANDING OFSTED rating in 2017; previously it was Good	NO GCSEs in 2016 (and earlier)	INCREASE FROM 15% TO 80% of pupils considered independent readers between 2015 and 2018.
	31 English Language & Literature GCSEs in 2017; 100% success rate; several passed with distinction	
	60 GCSEs will be attempted in 2018	
	85 GCSEs will be attempted in 2019, incl. for the first time by B-Strand pupils	

“We have higher expectations now. We stretch and challenge higher ability students more.”

Head of English

Entry level qualifications are now achieved by all A-Strand students in Y9 as opposed to being achieved by just a few in Y10 or 11.

Since 2015, the number of pupils in the A-Strand group has increased by 33%.

SPOT LIGHT >> THE FIRST-EVER A-LEVEL	STUDENT LIBBY will sit her English A-Level in 2018. She plans to enrol in English at the Open University and become a TA, while pursuing a teaching qualification.
	The school projects that 20 A-Levels will be attempted in 2019.

“Sita Brahmachari is my hero. Her books have gotten me through difficult times. Spending time chatting with her and seeing her writing process was a dream come true.”

“I never used to like reading, it always seemed too difficult but after meeting authors for the last three years I always have a book on me and want to be a teacher when I leave school.”

Libby, A Level student

THE % OF STUDENTS who make progress above expectation tripled:

Writing:
29% to 91%

Reading:
27% to 94%

Reading & Writing Attainment
% of students with progress above expectation





Ellie Sandall at Bradfields 2017 © Joel Ford



Christopher William Hill at Bradfields 2017 © Joel Ford

FESTIVITY & PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT

Bradfields have turned Pop Up Festival into a school-wide celebration as anchorpoint for the enjoyment of reading and writing in their academic year. This enthusiasm is spilling over into the home, as attested to by the quotes below.

PARENT LETTERS

are sent out each year, to inform about Pop Up Festival and visiting authors.

PARENTS ARE INVITED to attend workshops.

A PICNIC is organised for authors, teachers, pupils and parents.

THE FESTIVAL WAS MENTIONED DURING PARENTS EVENINGS, said class teachers, and that "parents really enjoyed seeing photos of the children interacting with authors".

They made "very positive comments on the displays around the school of work created during the sessions."

"ELISE GOT SO EXCITED when the author visited. All she did was read the book [Artichoke Hearts] and talk about what she was going to ask [Sita Brahmachari]. Ever since the workshop [she has been] writing her own stories at home about everything."

Parent of Bradfields Student

"We make a big deal of it!"

Class Teacher

"The enthusiasm leading up to the event reaped dividends in the amount and the standard of work produced by all our students, who wanted to impress the authors with their stories, reviews, illustrations about the texts and really anchored their learning."

Headteacher

WHAT PUPILS SAY about meeting authors:

"It meant a lot meeting the authors because it made reading more interesting."

"I loved meeting the authors, it made me want to be a writer."

"My workshop was great, I didn't realise that I was so good an artist."

CONFIDENCE, WELL-BEING AND BEHAVIOURS

Meeting authors has increased the confidence of Bradfields students and teachers have observed improved well-being and reading and writing behaviours, as the below quotes show.

READING CONFIDENCE

"One pupil was really inspired to start taking home a book one level above her current level. She has expanded her knowledge of vocabulary and now has the confidence to read at the next level."

Class teacher

WRITING CONFIDENCE

"One student has some weird and wonderful ideas, but struggles with structuring. She has improved her creative writing by following simple structuring steps and focusing on a clear storyline."

Class teacher

"Meeting the authors has put a human face to the name on the spine. It has taken away the fear factor."

Class teacher

"There are some students we have to lend our own books out to as their level of reading exceeds the school library."

Class teacher

"Being able to go for those standard qualifications has greatly impacted on confidence and well-being; many students are now able to share an experience with mainstream students and are not 'outsiders' anymore."

Head of English

"WRITING IN OUR SCHOOL is now being enjoyed, and of a very high standard; this is a direct result of our work since 2015, of which Pop Up is a very big part. Students are 15,000 words into writing their own stories, which is completely astounding."

Head of English

POP UP'S SURVEY SHOWS that 100% of Bradfields English teachers observed a change in independent reading and writing frequency amongst pupils as a direct result of Pop Up.

83% said reading had "greatly increased";
67% said the same about writing.



Salvatore Rubbino at Bradfields 2017 © Joel Ford

TEACHING PRACTICE

Participating in Pop Up has greatly benefited teachers of whom many are generalist (as opposed to specialist English) teachers. Utilising high-quality contemporary literature in imaginative ways has invigorated their teaching practices and motivation, as well as personal enjoyment of literature.

"Literature is now used more across the whole curriculum, for example to discuss issues such as racism, gender and empathy. Teachers are more likely to pick up a book outside of Pop Up to teach - an important connection for generalist teachers to literature has been made, inspiring English teaching."

Head of English

POP UP HAS CONDUCTED A SURVEY with all 6 English teachers at Bradfields in May 2018. The data below is based on these responses.

THE SCHOOL'S ETHOS around reading and writing for pleasure has changed over the last three years, as confirmed by 100% of English teachers. 50% said that Pop Up had somewhat contributed to this - and 50% said it had greatly contributed.

100% OF ENGLISH TEACHERS said they learned something new through the Festival and working with authors.

THE IMPORTANCE OF CREATIVITY was mentioned most frequently.

"I LEARNED TO LET STUDENTS BE MORE CREATIVE and to embrace the slightly wackier ideas (such as radioactive onions who turn people into zombies and take over the world) rather than guiding them back to more conventional ideas.

I FOUND THIS REALLY BOOSTED THEIR CONFIDENCE and their writing really improved as they were interested in and enjoying what they were writing. This meant they were much more likely to receive feedback on structure and grammar."

Class teacher

100% OF ENGLISH TEACHERS said working with books and their authors through Pop Up motivated them to work with literature more often in their classroom.

"I LEARNED TO ENJOY READING AGAIN - I stopped reading for pleasure at University and had struggled to get it into my routine again. Now I read regularly for pleasure - inspired by both Pop Up and the students who have in turn been inspired and reignited my love for reading and discussing brilliant books and authors.

Class teacher