

Children's BookFest 2022

Oct 30

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Children's BookFest 2022: What an incredible adventure! 33 talented authors visited 22 schools, covering 61 events and wowed almost 4,000 captivated children with their energetic and enthusiastic presentations. We've seen children behaving like crocodiles, roaring like lions and creating the most wonderful imaginative stories and pictures! Plenty of storytelling, quizzes, question and answer sessions and even yoga! So much laughter and joy, inspiration and admiration, and of course, every child participating, 3597 all told, took home a signed book, provided and paid for by Children's BookFest! We are proud beyond belief!

Kate Wilkinson author of *Edie and the Box of Flits* commented 'It's a very, very special rule of thumb that you offer every child a book.' We couldn't do this without the support of our benefactors and volunteers, so an enormous 'Thank You' goes to everyone who supports the charity. If you would like to buy a child a book, please find the donate page here. Andrew Strong from Portfield School said 'Thanks so much BookFest for giving each of our children a very special book to treasure.'

This year Children's BookFest reached out beyond Chichester to involve some Bognor schools for which the response was both brilliant and humbling. Phil Tite from Edward Bryant emailed to say: 'It was such a successful day and to see every single child walk away beaming from ear to ear with a book was just magical. It really was the perfect day. The BookFest charity really has changed lives today and I am so grateful to them for involving our school. I know these children will remember this for the rest of their lives. Many of them said this was the first ever book they have owned, which I know is what Children's BookFest is all about.' Wow! This is what it's all about and what motivates us to reach out to more and more children going forward.

Our mission is to provide opportunities for children to celebrate books, which we can wholehearted say we believe the BookFest does! Parklands school commented: 'It was lovely to see those pupils who don't normally enjoy reading a book coming out of the session, with their own copy, and sitting reading it.' Laura Turner at St Joseph's, new to Children's BookFest 2022 said 'Thank you so much. The children are still talking about it today.'

Children's BookFest is also a fantastic opportunity for authors to meet fellow creatives, at the end of each day, for tea and cake at BookFest HQ where they are able discuss life as a children's author. Our amazing team of volunteer stewards join us for a celebration of the wonderful day's presentations and discuss all things 'Children's books'. Lots of banter and chat ending with big smiles on everyone's faces! Cath Howe author of *The Insiders* wrote to say, 'Thanks again for the warm welcome, for tea and organisation throughout, it was a pleasure to be involved.'

Jason Rohan, author of *STEALTH Access Denied* wrote to say, 'I thoroughly enjoyed my time meeting the kids, school staff, and BookFest team and hopefully imparted some inspiration along the way. We hear a lot about the value of an author visit for young people, but the flip side is that it's invaluable for the author too, to meet and engage with the audience for whom they are writing. I know that I feel motivated and challenged to tell better stories as a result.'

Our secondary school visits were also hugely appreciated. Marianne DeGiovanni from Bishop Luffa school wrote to say: 'Joseph Elliot, author of 'The Good Hawk' was charming, and the students enjoyed his presentations very much indeed. He is a testament to the BookFest and all that it stands for. Most decidedly worth it.' Lynda Elmes Head of English at Chichester Free School commented, 'The pupils relished the opportunity to question an actual author and it was a delight to see them asking the questions that we often theorise about in the classroom when we consider 'What would you ask the author?'

A year 7 pupil said of Andy Mulligan, author of Trash, 'Ever since I met him, he has boosted my knowledge on how to write a book, I liked him.'

Thank you to everyone involved – authors, publishers, schools, stewards and the marvellous team at BookFest HQ. What a fabulous Children's BookFest week!

A selection of Author and school Testimonials:

Nicola Garrard author of 29 Locks said, 'Young People get so much out of the in person events and the chance to ask questions of authors.'

Lindsay Galvin author of My Friend the Octopus responded, 'Really lovely day! I think what you are doing is amazing – wonderful events!'

Another response from Chichester High School simply said, 'Reading was the winner yesterday!'

Andy Mulligan author of 'Trash' said, 'Teachers and pupils were wide awake in every sense, hungry for input and ready to discuss and interrogate.'

Donald Vass, Jessie Younghusband School wrote, 'Once again, we found the sessions to be really well organised and a wonderful initiative that we are always delighted to take part in. We feel very lucky to be able to enjoy it with you.'

One teacher from Chidham Primary School said, 'It was really good, I mean really, really good!'

There are lots of photos with this article on the Bookfest website.