

## Pori Drwy Stori Case Study: Boomerang Book Bags



Danygraig Primary School used the Boomerang Book Bags in the school and home context and as an important bridge between settings. The project generated excitement about reading for the children, which was evident at school and at home, with even reluctant readers highly enthusiastic and enjoying books.

### The Approach

Danygraig Primary is an English medium primary school in the east of Swansea. The school has a high percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. The Boomerang Book Bags were used in the spring term of 2016 by the Reception teacher Sian Stokes. Sian used the books as the basis of classroom learning and also to generate excitement about reading for pleasure in the home. Parental engagement is an important feature of the principles underpinning the Foundation Phase and using the books across both the home and school setting was an effective way to engage families in children's learning.

### What is the Boomerang Book Bag?

Boomerang Book Bags are delivered to schools as part of the Pori Drwy Stori programme to engage parents and carers in literacy and numeracy over the Reception year. Each Reception class receives a set of bags, at least one for every five children. The bags contain two new picture books: one in English and one in Welsh. Books are chosen because they are appealing and fun, create playful learning opportunities, and can develop outcomes of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework [LNF]. Each child takes it in turn to go home with the bag and in addition, each child receives a [magazine](#) to keep. The magazine contains activities linked to the books and models playful and interactive approaches to reading that parents and carers can try at home.

### Introducing the Boomerang Book Bags

Sian invited parents and carers into the school for an introduction to the Boomerang Book Bags. Using the [presentation](#) available on the Pori website she introduced the book bags, informing families the resource was part of the Pori Drwy Stori programme and would reinforce the learning that would happen this term in the classroom. This was also an opportunity to share key messages about the importance of reading for pleasure in the home and give parents a few tips about how to have fun with books. Families were shown resources on the Pori website, such as the [audio](#) versions of the books.

### Integrating into Classroom Learning

Prior to sending books home, Sian read both stories in the classroom. Sian then concentrated initially on the English title: *Open Very Carefully*, which starts with a crocodile appearing in the tale of the Ugly Duckling, and subsequently eating his way out of the book. Sian saw this as a fun way for the class to discover several traditional tales, which was fitted well with her focus that term on traditional stories.

Sian placed a crocodile costume in the book corner for children to wear and look for other books to visit as the crocodile. On World Book Day the class made crocodile bookmarks, as suggested in the [teacher toolkit](#) for the resource. Children then hid the crocodile in other books that they chose to read. The children enjoyed sequencing pictures to help re-tell the story. Sian also used the opportunity to introduce linked texts, reading *The Enormous Crocodile* to the class and developing outcomes of the LNF by introducing non-fiction texts and electronic sources for children to create their own fact sheets about crocodiles.

After Easter, Sian's theme was Creepy Crawlies, which correlates with the Welsh book in the pack, *Waldo a'i We Wych*. Working with Athrawes Bro, Sian planned activities through Welsh that include art, movement, science and a spider hunt. She also used the story to reinforce the topic of shapes.





### Continuous Provision

When both books have been home to each child, Sian will keep the sets of the books readily available in the continuous provision. Sian will also use the set of English books for guided reading with groups of children, taking advantage of having multiple copies of a book that children know and enjoy.

### Sending the bags home

To best support classroom learning, Sian is sending the Boomerang Book Bag home in two rounds: initially the bag goes home containing the English book subsequently containing the Welsh book. Therefore, each term, home reading is supporting classroom based activities.

Sian is also adding a puppet to each bag to encourage families to play around the book and develop oracy and role-play. She will also include a fact-finding task about spiders with the Welsh book, reinforcing skills gained in the classroom during the crocodile fact-finding activity.

Sian sent the bags home every Friday, requesting that they were returned the subsequent Thursday. She initially chose to send the bag to families that would provide good role models and act as a catalyst for the rest of the class. Children completed the drawing on the back of the magazine and brought this back into school and Sian displayed these in a prominent place for parents to see, which generated excitement about the books among other families.

The books were also sent to a child that was absent from school as a way for the school to keep in touch.

### Results

Sian commented that *Open Very Carefully* had been enjoyed by all children, noting in particular that boys in her class who were reluctant readers really enjoyed the book and couldn't wait to take it home. Parents came into class to speak with Sian to say how much their children had enjoyed reading the book at home and completing the activity magazine together, one parent stating that, 'he knows it off by heart.'

Parents and carers of children in Sian's class enjoyed the books and many reported that they had had fun reading at home: "I can recall a lovely time with the 3 of us lying in bed one evening sharing the books. The children laughed so much".

Parents also commented that sharing the books between the home and school was a strength of the approach: "My child was excited to bring home the Boomerang Book Bag, it made him feel special"; and "It was nice to sit and read the stories together and know that we can feed back to school".

Families also appreciated the quality of the resources, both the books and the magazine: "it was lovely that they were new books that we hadn't seen before"; and "he loved the magazine, he enjoyed using the whole booklet. He would often go and get it independently."

Sian also commented that parents and carers had been asking for more books and activities since taking the Boomerang Book Bags home and as a direct response to this she is going to reintroduce the CAPER [Children and Parents Enjoy Reading] scheme in her school. This means, that in addition to a reading book, each child and parent will chose a story book each week to read at home.

Danygraig school has therefore used the Boomerang Book Bag as a catalyst to support families to develop regular habits of reading for pleasure.

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