

Sarah McIntyre gets school kids bubbling with creativity

From spider teachers to lion astronauts and beetle spies, children's illustrator and writer Sarah McIntyre inspires children to get creative in primary schools across Northern Ireland



9th May 2019 This week over three-hundred students from five Northern Ireland primary schools have had a chance to meet world renowned children's illustrator and writer Sarah McIntyre in interactive book sessions arranged by the UK's largest reading charity, [BookTrust](#).

Sarah McIntyre, well known for her comic 'Vern and Lettuce' and picture books 'There's a Shark in the Bath' and 'Dinosaur Police' hosted sessions on May 7th and 8th with students from Portavogie Primary (Newtownards), Portaferry Integrated Primary School (Newtownards), Belmont Primary School (Belfast), St Joseph's Primary School (Belfast) and Orangefield Primary School (Belfast).

Students were eager to whip out their pencils, paper and books ready for an interactive session of reading and fun with Sarah. She helped students to think creatively to come up with ideas for their own books by thinking of animals and different jobs they could do, from spider teachers, lion astronauts and beetle spies! Sarah talked about how she made her books and taught the pupils to draw Dipsy the Diplodocus from Dinosaur Firefighters.

Children's author Sarah McIntyre said: "Seeing the faces of students as they become inspired to read and draw is one of my favourite parts of being an author and is always so rewarding. It's also wonderful to see the teachers growing appreciation of drawing in the classroom and using it as a way of encouraging the children even further. The fact that every child got a copy of the book to take home was the cherry on top and created a huge wave of excitement among the kids!"

Liz Canning, Head of BookTrust Northern Ireland commented: "Hosting these sessions is a great way to engage children with reading and books. As children read more often in school they can lose touch with the creativity and fun in books. There are so many benefits to children reading for pleasure and it's so important to remind and inspire them."



Damian Smyth, Head of Literature and Drama, Arts Council of Northern Ireland, said: “Artist visits like this are a fantastic opportunity for pupils to meet a successful writer or illustrator and gain an insight into their creative process. These workshops with Sarah McIntyre have been a great success - inspiring the children to start thinking about developing their own stories. The Arts Council is pleased to support BookTrust NI in promoting the value of reading to young people across Northern Ireland.”

All pupils received a copy of *Dinosaur Firefighters* after visit and each school also received a selection of Sarah’s books for their school library.

– Ends –

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Notes to Editors

BookTrust is dedicated to getting children reading because we know that children who read are happier, healthier, more empathetic and more creative. Their early language development is supported and they also do better at school.

We are the UK’s largest children’s reading charity; each year we reach 3.4 million children across the UK with books, resources and support to help develop a love of reading, because we know that reading can transform lives.

We work with a variety of partners to get children excited about books, rhymes and stories, because if reading is fun, children will want to do it. Our books are delivered via health, library, schools and early years practitioners, and are supported with guidance, advice and resources to encourage the reading habit. booktrust.org.uk