

PARTICIPATION PROJECTS – DOWNLOAD FOR 2023-4

As a headline:

- We have enabled **70** young people attend **133** workshops, holiday courses, skills training programmes and events through our bursary scheme.
- **9937** children and adults have accessed The Story Museum's Learning provision over **328** sessions to date, including **44** sponsored school trips to The Story Museum.
- **67** schools and community groups have engaged in **24** participation projects, involving **619** preschoolers, **2314** primary students, **129** secondary students, and **574** adults.
- **248** people have visited the Museum on Dream Tickets, allowing entry at only £1 per head;
- **10** artists have worked on dedicated projects with students: storyteller Jan Blake, poets Joshia Seigal and Kate Wakeling, percussionist Ollie Turner, theatre maker Jules Head, designers Rebecca Lee and Ioana Simion, and authors Patience Agbabi, Sita Brahmachari and Piers Torday.

For 0-5 year olds and their carers

Start With a Story

Project launched January 2023

Start with a Story is a three-year engagement project for early years children, their families, and carers in areas of disadvantage in Oxfordshire where children are less likely to be able to access early cultural activity.

By providing in-centre opportunities for story-based learning and following up with Story Museum visits we aim to empower children to be the narrator of their own life story and equip them with the tools they need to prepare them for future success.

Our partners for 23-24 are Growing Minds and Donnington Doorstep.

2-year-old was so keen to get the story started on week 3 that she ran outside to get her mum shouting excitedly "Mummy Story!" and clapped her hands.

- Participant, June 2023

For 5-11 year olds

Spellbound Schools

July 2023-July 2024

Spellbound Schools have the opportunity to truly embed an ethos of stories into their school's culture, enabling at least one glorious encounter for every student and teacher. It involves a year-long programme of Museum visits and in-school workshops, a weekly reading club for targeted students, a magical Story Suitcase and teacher CPD in oral storytelling. Our Spellbound Schools for 2023-24 are St Christopher's CE Primary School, John Henry Newman Academy, Abbey Woods Academy, St Francis CE Primary, St Joseph's Catholic Primary School, St Ebbe's C of E Primary and St Mary's and St John's C of E Primary School.

We have really appreciated the thought and careful consideration of all the marvellous activities and events that you have given to us over the year. Our children have really benefitted from this project.

- North Kidlington School, 22-23 Spellbound School

Blue Sky Book Clubs

Ongoing

Our Spellbound Schools select a small group of students to take part in a weekly book club led by a member of our Learning team. Each student is gifted 2 books each and meet in school for story sessions to engage them with the story and raise their motivation to read the books. This year, we have worked with 10 schools delivering Blue Sky Book Clubs, to a total of 95 students.

We do lots of activities and I liked when I got the certificate and the 2 tickets because they calmed me a bit.

- Participant 2023

Extreme Reading Adventures

Annual project

Now in its ninth iteration, our long-running, much-loved, high-impact project involves 24 nominated students to meet at the Story Museum for a series of 6 sessions on a Sunday. Over 6 weeks children are gifted a book per week and an associated adventure linked to the book. This project has been run since 2014 with outstanding impact results on raising students' motivation to read for pleasure.

My child has been excited to take part and has been much keener to read since taking part in the programme. Reading to his sister, talking about the sessions and asking me to buy him specific books to continue his reading journey.

- Parent of participant, 2024

The Wild Escape

May-July 2023

Funded by ArtFund and coinciding with our new temporary exhibition, Brilli-Ant, we have welcomed over 50 students for sponsored visits to the Museum to co-curate insect sculptures and pilot our new Minibeast Adventure, a climate-themed session.

Expert Explainers

January - February 2024

Headington Partnership has been working with different museums across Oxford to provide this 5-week programme which strives to build student's confidence outside of the classroom. The Learning & Participation connected with 11 pupils from across 4 schools: Barton Park, St Andrews, Windmill and Woodfarm who came each week to The Story Museum. At the end of the project, we had 20 family and friends arrive to watch the young people. Everyone spoke at least once talking about their room/object or both. At the end of the tour, the group were bought down to the MCR where they had celebration cake and were given a certificate and Dream Ticket to a huge round of applause. Many parents commented on how proud they were of the young people for publicly speaking.

For 11-18 year olds

Story Curators

September 2023– May 2024

As part of an extensive scheme to create a new generation of story makers, this weekly programme is for 12-16 year olds who get hands-on with the museum's professional Exhibitions and Production Teams to develop skills in curation, design and construction. For its pilot year, we had 5 young people take part creating a brand new Mouse Tale through the Enchanted Library, help build props for the brand new Alice niche, and develop ideas for a brand new niche due to open in 2025.

Story Connectors

Launching April 2024

A year long series of workshops with 12-16 year olds exploring different ways to engage and respond to the 1001 through zine making, podcasting and film making. Content created through the programme will be shared online as part of the 1001 digital collection project. Taster sessions were held in Rosehill and Barton Community Centres in February 2024 to great success, working with 13 young people across one day with Zine artist Ioana Simions, who will continue to work with these cohorts from April 2024 onwards.

Everything is Connected

September – November 2023

This programme commissioned 3 new stories by Piers Torday, Sita Bramachari and Patience Agbabi, on climate activism and a new future. The award-winning writers ran workshops to inspire stories in The Swan School, Oxford Spires Academy and Greyfriars Catholic School working with a total of 61 students. The project also involved adult masterclasses and panel discussions on how stories can help us imagine a better future and culminating in a final celebration event where stories created as part of these workshops was read out by the authors at The Story Museum.

I learnt how to make a book not only eco-friendly but also how to make it fun.

- Participant from Greyfriars, 2023

Kindling

Launched January 2024

Kindling is a 6 week in-school reader engagement programme for targeted students. Each week, the Story Museum Session Leader arrives with a book to be gifted to students, one per student. During the session, the students are led through an 'adventure' linked to the book, harnessing creative play, team challenges, discussion and role play to motivate the students to read the book. In the final session, each student is gifted a book of their own, carefully selected especially for each individual student based on their personal interests. This year, we worked with Cherwell School and The Swan School, working with a total of 26 students from Year 7. In April 2024 we will be heading to Oxford Spires to deliver this project to their Year 8 students.

The students have above all enjoyed themselves so much. These young people have challenging lives and it is wonderful to see them smile and be enthusiastic and to see their faces lit up. It is a highlight to watch them unwrap their books at the end of the session. They have looked forward to the sessions and were really sad when it all ended. They are much more engaged and focused in the Kindling sessions than in their regular lessons. They learned that learning can be fun.

- Teacher from Kindling 2024

Minecraft Museum: Funded by the ArtFund

Project completed April 2023

21 pupils from 2 local secondary schools created a digital version of The Story Museum on Minecraft. The students also added stories not currently featured in The Story Museum such as Shakespeare's *The Tempest*.

For adults

The Story Exchange

Launched July 2023

Funded by Paul Hamlyn

A year of advanced, practice-based CPD for teachers to explore and develop the impact of oracy on socio-emotional literacy in students. 14 teachers involved from 8 partner schools train in oral storytelling techniques. Teachers and Story Leaders then work together to deliver storytelling sessions in the classroom to learn from each other's practises as part of this collaborative project. The Story Leaders have a very active role in the school sessions rather than a passive observation role.

Reading Teachers = Reading Pupils founded by Cheltenham Festivals

Annual project, following the academic year

Funded inhouse

RTRP is a reading for pleasure group for teachers which aims to ignite teachers' love of children's literature and so develop reading for pleasure in their pupils. 15 teachers from our Spellbound Schools and beyond have been gifted 5 books over the course of the year, identified by Cheltenham Festivals as representative of the latest in high quality children's literature. Now in it's third year the project has become very popular, with teachers reported how they are now reading more children's fiction for pleasure and that the stigma of being seen reading "kids" books had been removed. Many reported feeling more knowledgeable and confident about children's books.

This group has made me genuinely excited about reading.

- Teacher from 23-24 co-hort

I didn't like reading at the beginning of the year because I wasn't interested but now I love reading because the Story Museum helped me love a lot of books.

- Student from our Spellbound School

For families and community groups

Week of Welcome

August 2023

Our annual Week of Welcome occurs every August and invites families who have recently arrived in the UK to explore the therapeutic and joyous world of story at The Story Museum. Translators in Arabic, Pashtu, Farsi and Ukrainian, who had themselves been in The Story Museum's 2021 project Beyond Amal, help to facilitate these sessions.

Caribbeanity Now

Project completed June 2023

Partnership project with The Oxford Research Centre in Humanities (TORCH) researching, sharing and celebrating Caribbean Stories with intergenerational participants in Oxford. Storyteller Jan Blake visited 85 Year 5 students from Pegasus School and St John Fisher

Academy land shared Caribbean stories and invited responses to those stories with the children. The children also explored how stories travel and the cultural and historical forces that shape stories. Working with ACKHI (African and Caribbean Kultural Heritage Initiative) Jan also delivered a joyous session with Caribbean and African elders living in Oxford sharing memories of the stories, songs and riddles they grew up with.

Story Stars

October 2023 – March 2024

Story Stars is the starting point for The Story Museum to improve their visitor experience and creative participation opportunities for visitors with Access Needs. Artist in Residence Jules Head worked with members of KEEN Oxford to co-create an installation in the Museum that everyone can access. The creative process explored the question 'Who has the right to be an author?' and has led Jules to conceptualise a sensory 3D scroll – a narrative map - offering visitors the opportunity to create their own story in an open-ended playful way. The format is inspired by material generated from the workshops including a 3D layered narrative scroll which participants enjoyed engaged with during the sessions. The scroll will be installed in the Writers Nook in the Enchanted Library, a space that invites visitors to sit, reflect and write their own stories.

The Story Museum have been fantastic throughout...it was such an exciting and special venue for the young people to explore. I think it gave our young people a fantastic creative outlet, and gave them more confidence with exploring their own ideas.

- Coordinator of KEEN Oxford

Co-Created Audio Description Guides

February 2024

We have been looking at installing Audio Description Guides within our galleries to offer a unique and accessible experience all our visitors can enjoy. We invited members of MyVision Oxfordshire to come and co-create these by visiting our galleries. Their experience was recorded and transcribed, before being scripted into an audio tour by storyteller Giles Abbott. Over the course of next year these will be recorded and uploaded to our Audio Guides and will be offered to visitors in early 2025.

The guides massively enhance the experience and make it 10 x better. It takes the pressure off of carers/parents to have to describe everything.

- Parent of child testing the guides