



The Plot Thickens

September 2023 ~ August 2024





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The Story Continues...

About Us

Grimm & Co was founded in 1148, just before lunchtime, by Graham and Grizelda Grimm. Since then, we have situated ourselves in Rotherham, occupying many strange and unusual buildings, to serve the children and young people of this great South Yorkshire town and beyond. Our mission is to change lives one story at a time by supporting under-resourced children and young people aged 0-18 with their confidence and skills around creative writing, through the joyful discovery of stories.

Our writing workshops take place across many settings. We aim to empower children and young people using a child-led approach for them to make meaning of the world around them and contribute to that meaning. A variety of writing forms

and genres are explored, from magazines to novellas, poems to songwriting, animation to storymaking. And we take fun VERY seriously.

This report covers the 23-24 academic year, when we finally moved into our new and permanent home, the Emporium of Stories. Our story destination is now complete, and that means we can continue to work with children and young people, raising their self-belief and giving them a platform to celebrate their achievements.

We are simply the stage managers, dressing the space and setting the scene, ready for the participants to take centre stage and wow us with their imaginative creations such as:

"It was really fun, and we got to make really nice, lovely sentences using imperative verbs like 'If your brother gets sucked down a plughole you must play a ukulele.'"

Y4 pupil
Acres Hill Community
Primary School



Ronnie-Ann James
a dream-speaker made out of rubbish, created by Phillimore Community Primary School, Acres Hill Community Primary School and High Hazels Academy



5C0UT
A survey and expedition robot created by Connor in Saturday Afternoon Club



The Custard Creatures & Co
Saturday Morning Club band, hopefully going on a world tour in 250 years' time.





Emporium of Stories Opening

The opening of Yorkshire's Emporium of Stories took place with a flourish in April 2024. The children and young people who have experienced our literacy activities were delighted to cut the giant red ribbons and welcome a host of excited, distinguished guests inside to hear the story behind the redevelopment of this impressively restored building.

As one of Arts Council England's National Portfolio Organisations, Grimm & Co is supported with a contribution towards core costs and the charity has also been fortunate to secure additional significant capital investment from the Arts Council, UK Shared Prosperity Funds, Town Centre Regeneration Funds, Key Fund and a generous local philanthropist's donation towards their new home.

The Feastery served Darkwoods coffee and homemade cakes galore with a magical and mortal menu. The medieval banqueting space hosted over 80 guests to hear the fictional story of how Graham Grimm opened the first fairytale shop back in 1148, just before lunchtime. Guests were then ushered past the Source of Creativity (a water fountain in a cupboard) and up the giant's bookcase to explore the many secret doors of the other realm (the first floor).

The event concluded with a few words from Patron, Paul Clayton; Head of Learning, Gemma Thornton; BBC broadcaster and Freelance Artist, Sile Sibanda and the fictional back story of Grimm & Co was told by Writer in Residence and co-creator of The League of Gentlemen and Ghost Stories, Jeremy Dyson.

"Grimm & Co is really important because it's got no limits to its imagination. It's a magical place and if you were a young person born in Rotherham or who lived in Yorkshire, and who came here for the first time, you'll see a whole world of possibility and imagination and magic in front of you."

Darren Henley
Chief Executive of Arts
Council England

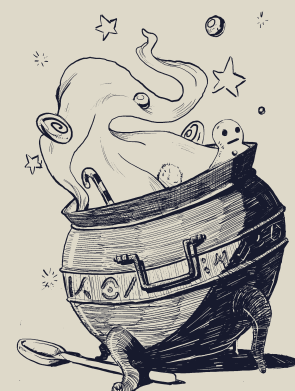


"This has been a long time coming. Four years since purchasing the building for the charity to make its new home and on this monumental day for Yorkshire and for this town, we opened the doors to a unique place full of awe and wonder that anyone can visit. We hope this enchanting place will pulse with the stories of those who come along. We are truly grateful to the funders, supporters, staff and volunteers who made this possible."

Deborah Bullivant
Founding Chief Executive of Grimm & Co

"It's like the best magic trick I've ever seen, what has happened to this building. There's nowhere else like it in the world. It's literally mind blowing!"

Jeremy Dyson
Writer in Residence





GRIMM FACTS

In-school provision:
1804 children and young people
from 56 schools/alternative provisions
across 9 writing projects
resulting in 3697 creative
learning experiences

School Provision

A Call to Create

A Call to Create is an arts-based literacy provision placing the pupil at the heart of the learning journey where they devise and generate the story that they will then explore. From the point of conception to the creative delivery in schools, the children lead the way.

At the start of the 23-24 academic year, Grimm & Co were keen to involve everyone including teaching staff, senior leaders, Grimm & Co staff, associate artists, pupils and community members from the Sheffield South-East Learning Partnership (SSELP schools). We conducted a consultation with three of the schools who created a brilliant story, Ronnie-Ann James and the Dream Spiders. Grimm & Co then popped up

with an immersive theatre space called The Everywhereium and delivered a 4-week residency, which applied our way of working to the National Curriculum.

So far, we have conducted 4 consultations and 4 residencies, working with 239 Y4 pupils.

Impact:

“You know you’re doing something right as a school leader, when you’re on duty on the yard at breaktime and you overhear some Year Fours playing football saying, ‘I can’t wait for break to be over because we’ve got English with Grimm & Co!’”

Headteacher
Pipworth Community Primary School

“It didn’t feel like we were doing loads of writing because it was really fun and when you’re having fun time goes very fast.”

Y4 pupil
Acres Hill Community
Primary School





School Provision

Spoken Word Power

This was the final year of the Spoken Word Power project, a poetry programme by Eastside Educational Trust, where Grimm & Co was a regional partner. The theme this year was 'Hear My Voice' and we engaged with 9 schools and 285 pupils.

Pupils worked with a trained Poet Educator to develop their very own piece of spoken word poetry which was performed in a school poetry slam.

The winner of the slam from each school went on to perform at a celebratory event at the Rotherham Civic Theatre on World Poetry Day.

Objectives:

- Cultivate an understanding of 'voice' through a range of perspectives, including the notion of what it means to be heard and why we want to be listened to through a personal lens.
- Explore the theme through a range of interactive, collaborative activities and exercises.
- Employ a selection of poetry tools and techniques to further develop children and young people's poems.
- Create, edit, rehearse and perform a group or individual poem.

"Seeing the children up there performing and their confidence, I felt so proud when they got a massive standing ovation. They were so calm, I don't know if I would have been able to do that when I was their age. And also the parents, they were very thankful so yeah, a very proud teacher."

Teacher
Thornhill Primary School.

Impact:

We asked participants whether they agreed with the following statement:

"I feel happy when I'm being creative."





In-house provision:
1257 children and young people
from 39 schools/alternative provisions
in South Yorkshire and Derbyshire
across 4 writing programmes

GRIMM FACTS

School Provision

Storymaking

Storymaking is Grimm & Co's most popular school workshop that takes place across a morning in our Emporium of Stories. Our facilitators tell the tale of how we came to be, introducing our mysterious bosses, Graham and Grizelda Grimm who founded Grimm & Co in 1148, just before lunchtime.

During their time at Grimm & Co, the children and young people create a story together – whilst being hassled by the voice of the unseen Graham or Grizelda Grimm. The Grimms are desperate for the children to create stories because imagination gives energy to the magical beings! Our child-empowered approach allows children's imaginations to run free, while an illustrator draws the characters and setting live, straight onto the page!

Finally, all pupils write their own individual ending and leave our Emporium of Stories as published authors.

Impact:

"L is autistic and on entering the building, immediately said that she was frightened and did not want to participate. Gem put her at ease at once by emphasising that this was a 'no-pressure environment', and that L was free to opt in and out as she chose. As it happened, L was so enthralled by the workshop that not only did she participate fully, but she stood up at the end to read her story out and was praised by the mystical Grizelda."

Teacher
Wales High School

"The children's eagerness to write for pleasure has shown since we have been to Grimm. It has taken over just doodling in books and I am seeing some interesting stories."

Teacher
Emmaus Catholic CofE
Primary School



Inspiring Happy Writers

In November 2023, Grimm & Co teamed up with Chol to deliver Inspiring Happy Writers: a professional development day for teachers and artists. The event showcased our arts-based approaches to the National Curriculum to enable children and young people to feel enthusiastic about writing, to focus on their own development as a writer and to tell the stories that are important to them.

Chol explored their Imaginary Communities programme, where all participants in the learning journey become equal playmakers. Grimm & Co introduced their Unruly Rules punctuation

sessions, where pupils 'become' the punctuation, personalising the learning journey, making meaning to them as individuals.

31 teachers and artists attended the professional development day, and we are planning Inspiring Happy Writers 2.0 in May 2025.

Impact:

"I'm going to allow myself to have fun with my class and get lost in their imagination."

Teacher
Inspiring Happy Writers



Out of School Provision

Saturday Club Morning Group: The Saturday Club Band Project

Saturday Club champions creativity, fun and friendship and is a safe space where young people will always be accepted for being their authentic self. It encourages participants to share their ideas, and The Saturday Club Band Project was an idea initiated from one of our long-term members. Through songwriting, storytelling, and working with an Associate Artist Musician, the project improved literacy skills but also promoted confidence through the young people performing on stage to their family and friends.

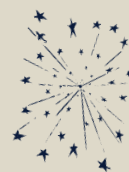
The project gave birth to the highly popular band, The Custard Creatures & Co, which clearly highlighted the young people's love for custard cream biscuits! The Saturday Club Band had multiple outputs which included headlining the

Festival of Stories Live Showcase; featuring on the front page of The Rotherham Advertiser; and they even opened the Rotherham Show! The Saturday Club Band brought the young people, their families and friends together where everyone celebrated the members' hard-work, imagination and teamwork.

Impact:

87.5%

of children and young people expressed an increase in their self-confidence.



87.5%

of children and young people said that they can be themselves be at Grimm & Co. The one person who said no was because he can't be a cat!

Saturday Club Afternoon Group: Novella Project

Over the 2023-2024 academic year, the Saturday Club Afternoon Group worked on writing their own novella or an extended piece of writing. The young people began their writing journey from scratch and were introduced to different genres and styles. Throughout the year, they had to consider narrative structure, plot points and characters, which were facilitated through fun and informative workshops. Joanne Harris joined the group for one of the sessions to give some writing advice and also share her experience as a writer. Every week, the young people received feedback from their assigned novella buddy and participated in workshops that explored different writing techniques. Their hard-work and dedication to the craft

concluded in all of them completing a piece of writing which is going to be published and showcased at The Festival of Stories in 2025.

Impact:

100%

of the young people said they were proud of their novella.



100%

of the young people felt more confident in writing extended pieces of work after completing the project.

100%

of the young people said their writing had improved after completing the project.



"The girls LOVED doing the project! Their confidence has grown so much since being at Grimm! They will be gutted next month when it finishes for the summer holidays!"

Saturday Club Parent





Out of School Provision

Young Leaders

The fourth year of our Young Leaders programme saw our creative rascallions deliver the speech to open our brand-new writing centre. The Young Leaders interviewed children and young people from other Grimm & Co programmes to find out how they felt about the work that we do. They collated all of this together and curated their own speech – which they performed – in April 2024.

They have returned to Grimm & Co with an appetite to do more, learn more and steer our charity in the right direction to ensure we are always representative and

relevant to the children and young people of South Yorkshire. In the winter of 2024, the Young Leaders will be running their own recruitment drive for new members so watch this space!

Impact:

100%

of Young Leaders felt supported in performing their speech.

100%

of Young Leaders were happy with the content of the speech

“The children were so engaged in the Everywhereium, the excitement was in their faces. It was great that they linked props back to the story that they hadn’t been involved in.”

Miss Malik, Acres Hill Community Primary School

Marvellous Mistakes

From April – May 2024, Grimm & Co delivered the Marvellous Mistakes (2.0) project which was a repeat of the successful programme that had been delivered in the autumn term of 2022. The project was aimed at 9–13-year-olds and took place over five weeks at Grimm & Co.

The overall aim of the project was to engage children and young people in writing for fun without the boundaries and restrictions of ‘making mistakes’, to let go of the internalised perfectionism within all of us and to allow themselves to play with creativity, imagination and silliness.

In each session, we explored a range of art forms such as drama, visual art and poetry to play with the concept of making mistakes – on purpose! This all worked towards the final outcome of the

programme where the group created their Marvellous Mistakes (2.0) Activity Book. The children and young people created all the activities, prompts and ideas that populated the publication which is now on sale in Grimm & Co’s Apothecary.

Impact:

100%

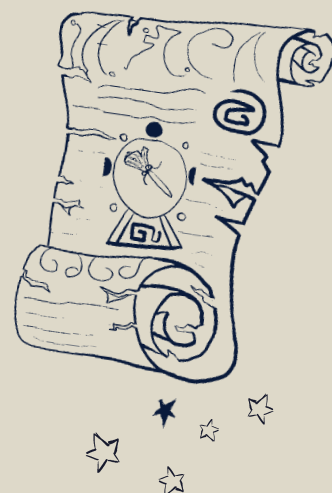
of the children and young people stated that they ‘loved’ the project!

87.5%

of the children and young people stated that they are ‘way more confident’ after taking part.

50%

of the children and young people stated that their ‘Light Bulb moment’ was that it is okay to make mistakes.





GRIMM FACTS

Family Learning provision:

452 families

across 15 Family Learning projects

resulting in 1283 creative learning experiences

Family Learning Provision

In 2023-2024, Grimm & Co consulted with families who previously attended our provision to explore what they would like to see in future sessions. We also consulted with families out in the community at Rotherham Show, Ferham Festival and Rotherham Markets, as well as organisations such as the YWCA and the Breastfeeding Support Group.

After gathering information, we reached out to Family Hubs and were successful in becoming a Satellite Hub, where we will be working in partnership with children's health and the local council to offer training and advice as well as signposting parents/carers to other services.



"Seeing my little girl engaging with the magic of creative play at a place so close to my heart. Watching her eyes widen as she plays, explores and listens to stories. Thank you."

Parent
Curiouser & Curiouser



Curiouser & Curiouser

Curiouser and Curiouser has continued to grow and is now a core programme at Grimm & Co. We recognise that parents/carers are busy and rarely have the time to sit and reflect, so we have now incorporated journalling into the sessions. Journals are given at the end of the sessions for parents/carers to add their thoughts, reflections and observations. It's worth noting here that if a parent/carer is not a confident writer, they are encouraged to express themselves in any way they want (through drawing for example) in their journal. The Family Learning Coordinator fills the journals with photos each week and then families can take these home at the end of the programme. This has been a real success as the evaluation is focused on the family, not on Grimm & Co; the parent/carer is completing the journal for themselves, to document their own journey. For us, this qualitative data is a rich narrative into the importance of the work we do.

Impact:

170 parents/carers have progressed to a further activity with Grimm & Co.

190 parents/carers have undertaken further activities with their children and have accessed resources at home.

1063 parents/carers have undertaken story-based creative communication activities with their children.

101 parents/carers feel greater confidence and courage around communicating with their child.





Family Learning Provision

The Garden Project

The Garden Launch was the opening of a brand-new space at Grimm & Co to end the summer activities. This was led by Grimm & Co's Children's Capital of Culture (CCoC) Creative Producer Trainees, Avumile and Dominic. It consisted of four separate sessions that ran for an hour each, spread across the day. These sessions were aimed at families and were attended by children and young people of all ages and their parents/carers.

Our main goal for the event was to introduce the new space to the public by using creative outdoor-themed activities and collect feedback to get a good idea of how the space works and what people would like it to be used for in the future.

Each session began with a new spiel about the garden's fictional story, followed by an exploration-based writing activity, and then expanded to five other activities that the attendees could rotate between.

We chose these activities because we felt they appealed to a broader age range of children and young people and provided ample opportunities for parents/carers to participate in the session alongside them.

Impact:

"I like the magical variety of activities."

Parent
The Garden Project

"A wonderful new addition! My children loved the free play in the sand and mud. Staff were really great and interactive!"

Parent
The Garden Project

Breastfeeding Support Group

The UK has some of the lowest breastfeeding rates in the world, with eight out of ten women stopping breastfeeding before they want to (Unicef UK). The current breastfeeding prevalence at 6-8 weeks after birth is 37.5% in Rotherham. This is significantly lower than the national average of 49.2% (rotherham.gov.uk). At Grimm & Co we believe it is our responsibility to support parents/carers in the first 1001 days of a child's life as this time has a lifelong effect on their health and wellbeing. As a result of this, our Family Learning Coordinator is trained in Breastfeeding Peer Support and has now established a strong link with the NHS feeding support services in Rotherham. As there were no support groups for new parents/carers within the central ward of Rotherham, we worked together with the local health service and ran a pilot feeding support group in the Feastery.



Following this, in April 2024 we were asked to hold the Global Big Latch On for Rotherham in which 69 people attended with 29 of those being breastfeeding mothers. We now hold a feeding support group in the Feastery once a fortnight where mums can meet for coffee, cake and a chat whilst accessing professional feeding support from the NHS feeding team and a group of trained peer supporters. Over 80 mums have now accessed the group and continue to do so, leading the way to Rotherham becoming a Breastfeeding Friendly Borough and working towards reaching the UNICEF Breastfeeding Friendly accreditation by March 2025.





Outreach & Engagement

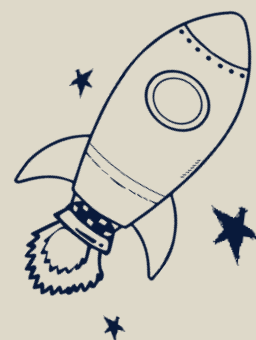
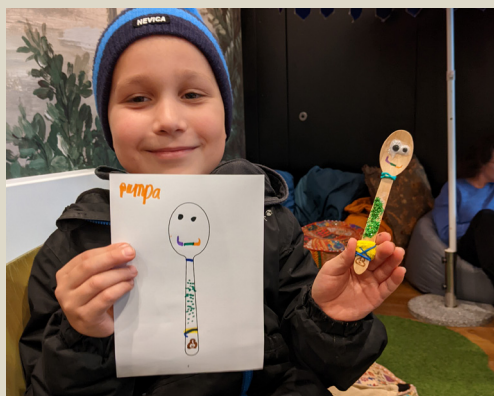
Refugee Council / Ukrainian Families

These sessions took place at Riverside Library in Rotherham, and we engaged children and young people in various activities every two weeks, between August 2023 to February 2024.

We also delivered a special session, The Lost Spoon, at the Emporium of Stories in February 2024, which included a "walking bus" and a treasure hunt from the Library to Grimm & Co. This was attended by 10 young people along with their parents/ carers and Refugee Council staff.

"It's the quieter children that don't usually get involved that thrive in this environment."

Mr Wray
Phillimore Community
Primary School





Rush House:

My Tupperware Is All Mismatched And I'm Better For It

Grimm & Co were approached by Rush House to run a series of creative writing sessions for their residents around reflecting on their experience and life at Rush. Rush House is a Rotherham-based charity that provides a range of accommodation and support services including advice, independent living skills and training to young people aged 16-25.

The sessions focused on developing reflection skills and improving wellbeing and creativity. Activities included creating a shared poem, reimagining the environment around them to make new meaning, journalling, stream of conscious writing, and cathexis. One of the key aims of the project was to encourage the young people to freely express themselves

creatively, and to support their wellbeing and encourage reflection on their lives. Based on the feedback from both staff and participants at the end of the project, it feels that this was achieved, and we plan to work with Rush in the future.

The output was a publication of the young people's writing and artwork, followed by a showcase event at the Emporium of Stories.

Impact:

"I can't believe we have written so much. I thought the book would have hardly anything in it."

Young Person
Rush House



"We have a boys' group consultation, where [one of the young people] mentioned Grimm & Co, where he has said that we should include a "Grimm & Co" style session – which I feel proves sentiment to what you have delivered this past month."

Rush House Staff





Volunteering & Our Success

Volunteers

Volunteers have continued to have a hugely positive impact at Grimm & Co. Since opening the Emporium of Stories, we have increased the amount of creative learning activities and services we provide. In order to increase commercial potential, using this wonderfully unique space, we have been able to host paid and unpaid events, such as conferences, teacher training, celebrations, spoken word poetry nights and lots more.

All of this has increased our need for volunteer support and our volunteers have certainly risen to the challenge. From pot washing, story mentoring, assisting in the shop to helping us set up events, they are a vital part of Grimm & Co's success.

To put their time into monetary value, volunteers have saved us approximately £48,860.00 in 2023-2024.

Impact:

91%

of volunteers said they have grown in confidence and skills giving them a better quality of life.

48%

of volunteers have undertaken further community engagement.

74%

of volunteers feel they have developed skills to support them in securing employment beyond Grimm & Co.

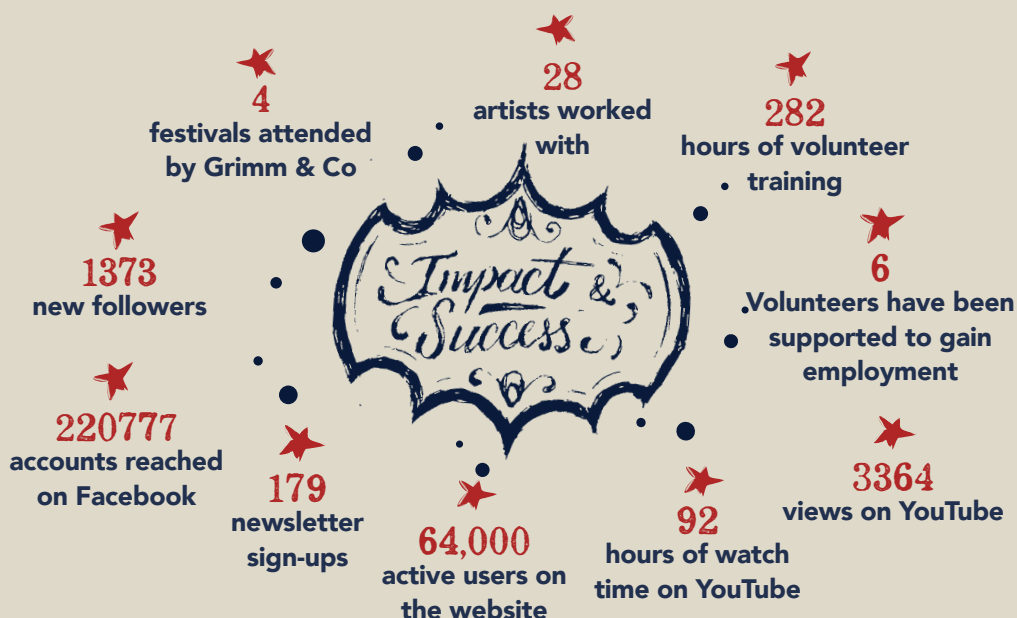
Volunteering and getting involved has also had an effect on my personality as well. I was finding myself more confident and happier in general. It helped me realise my value as a person who can make a difference and even helped me improve a number of skills."

Volunteer



Celebrating Success

There have been many successes at Grimm & Co this year, some of which have been highlighted in this report. Here is a snapshot of everything else!





Trainees & Children's Capital of Culture

Creative Producer Trainees

In association with Children's Capital of Culture, Grimm & Co have employed two Creative Producer Trainees to support over the course of the year, from February 2024 - March 2025.

They were given the responsibility of organising and planning Grimm & Co's garden project (The Botanist's Backyard of Books, Bees and Breaks), as well as supporting the opening of the Emporium of Stories. The Creative Producer Trainees have contributed original activities for The Feastery and monitor the data and usage of these.

On top of these overarching projects, the trainees are involved in many aspects of working at Grimm & Co including

facilitating, scribing, or being a story mentor in Storymaking sessions, helping with out-of-school clubs, taking part in any workshops and events held at Grimm & Co or externally, and helping out in The Feastery kitchen or The Apothecary shop floor. They will continue to create events and activities, one of which is Grimm & Co's Unbirthday Event which will take place in February 2025 and is one of the trainees' major projects.

The central aim of this traineeship is for Avumile and Dominic to progress their confidence and experience in areas of leadership, facilitation, production, creative learning, and working with children and young people.

"I liked free writing because it was very fun and you can show your feelings when you're writing it and if you don't know what to do it doesn't matter. It made me feel confident."

**Y4 pupil
Phillimore Community
Primary School**

Children's Capital of Culture year and the Festival of Stories

Next year, Rotherham will be the world's first Children's Capital of Culture. In the festival year, Grimm & Co will be collaborating with the brilliant organisations that are present across Rotherham to reach more children, young people and families than ever. Curated by local children and young people, the Children's Capital of Culture explores four themes:

- You're Not From New York City, You're From Rov'rum
- Who We Are, Where We Come From

- Plug In And Play
- The World Beneath Our Feet

Grimm & Co will be relaunching our Festival of Stories in 2025 after a successful pilot this year to celebrate all Rotherham stories and create an event that all Rotherham organisations can get involved in. We want to showcase, share, create and inspire imaginative writing and engage families in their own imagined narratives.

We want Rotherham to become a Story Town. See you next year.





Here's to you...

Thanks to...

All our funders, large and small, from our Order of Dreams and Dragons (ODD) and Benefactors and Fairy Godparent (B.F.G.) members to the organisations below:



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**



Funded by
UK Government



**Paul Hamlyn
Foundation**



"The volunteers were **INCREDIBLE**. Our students loved working with them- they were a key part of what made the whole experience so special."

Teacher
Wales High School

Your testimonials...

Your wonderful feedback means so much and provides a vital insight into what we have done well and what we can do better in the very near future.

"Allowing the children to write creatively without emphasis on grammar and punctuation. It was so lovely to see some of our lower writers really come alive in the session and offer their ideas and nothing suggested was too silly or wrong. They then went and wrote independently without complaining which was just fantastic!"

Teacher
Crags Community School

"H has been attending Grimm for 7 years now! He still loves to come every week; Grimm has had a massive influence on Harry's creativity and his love of language. I think this was reflected in H's work when it came to GCSEs."

Saturday Club Parent

"Wonderful experience for my little one to develop her creative, social and verbal skills. She is a reluctant talker and has a speech delay These sessions have encouraged her to speak to unfamiliar people and interact with others"

Family Learning Parent

