

Author Visit: An Afternoon of Imagination with Steve Cole

We were delighted to welcome children's author Steve Cole to school on Wednesday for an afternoon that was bursting with creativity, laughter and inspiration. His visit made a significant contribution to our ongoing work to promote reading for pleasure, enrich pupils' cultural capital, and nurture confident, imaginative writers.

Right from the start, Steve had the children fully engaged. He shared his key message: imagination can transform even the most ordinary idea into something extraordinary. He encouraged pupils to 'throw imagination' at something boring to spark a story - even something as plain as a piece of fruit. This simple but powerful approach helped pupils understand that stories can grow from anywhere if you give your brain permission to play with ideas.

A Focus on Creativity and Writerly Confidence

Steve emphasised that children should write for themselves first, without worrying about perfection or other people's opinions. This message strongly supports our school's work on building resilience, independence and a genuine love of writing.

He also introduced pupils to the joy of creating new words by merging two ideas together. This led to great excitement as children experimented with their own inventions. One of Steve's examples - the "*chonster*" (a mischievous *chair-monster* known to nibble teachers' bottoms!) - had pupils howling with laughter and eager to attempt word-building themselves.

Some class-created examples included:

- Snoozigator – a sleepy alligator that only wakes up when someone starts reading.
- Breezeburger – a hamburger so light it floats away before you can eat it.
- Glowmato – a tomato that lights up your lunchbox like a lantern.

These playful activities not only sparked creativity but also strengthened vocabulary, oracy and confidence - all key components of high-quality English provision.

Building a Love of Reading

At the end of the session, Steve generously spent time speaking with pupils, answering questions and signing books. His warmth and enthusiasm made a strong impression on the children, many of whom left the hall eager to read more and write their own stories.

This personal interaction helped reinforce our school's culture of reading for pleasure and provided pupils with a memorable, aspirational experience of meeting a real author.

A Highly Impactful Enrichment Opportunity

Across the afternoon, inspectors would have seen:

- high levels of engagement and enjoyment
- enriched vocabulary and imaginative thinking
- purposeful talk and active participation
- strong links to our English curriculum
- the development of cultural capital through meeting a published author
- pupils motivated and inspired to read and write more

Steve's visit was a wonderful reminder that reading opens doors, creativity is limitless, and every child has the potential to be a writer.

We are incredibly grateful to him for such an inspiring visit - one that will continue to influence pupils' ideas and enthusiasm for a long time to come.

