

COUNTY DURHAM SCHOOLS CELEBRATE CULTURAL SUCCESS

School children and teachers from 10 County Durham schools gathered at the Gala Theatre in Durham recently to celebrate success as part of the Government's Cultural Hub initiative.

Compered by improvisation specialists, The Suggestibles, the afternoon ceremony provided a platform for the young people, teachers, partner organisations and artists to share experiences and for each school to receive an award in recognition of its achievements throughout the three year programme.

“It was a really fantastic afternoon of sharing and celebration,” said Tony Harrington, director of The Forge, the Stanley-based specialist creative organisation who manages Cultural Hub Durham. “As well as watching specially commissioned films on each school, we also heard firsthand from teachers and pupils on the impact this ground-breaking initiative has had on their school and their learning. It was all very positive and exciting,” he added.

This was echoed by Jim McManners, headteacher of Cassop Primary School, who during the three years of being part of Cultural Hub Durham has watched his pupils grow not only in their creativity but also in confidence.

“If you'd had told me three years ago that a group of my children would produce and deliver a theatre style lecture to an audience of top professionals at the Royal Geographical Society in London, I wouldn't have believed you,” he said. “But last year that's exactly what they did. This initiative has not only allowed teachers and pupils to work with artists over a sustained period of time enabling them to grow and develop their ideas with confidence but also given them experiences that they will remember for the rest of their lives.”

The celebration day came after the 'Around the World' week at Dance City, where around 2000 children from eight of the Cultural Hubs schools, enjoyed a multi-cultural journey involving dance, music and art.

The Forge

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the **specialist** participatory arts organisation

For more information on Cultural Hub Durham please go to: www.intheforge.com

NOTE TO EDITOR:

Cultural Hub Durham is a government initiative managed by creative organisation The Forge, which aims to inspire young people through cultural and education partnerships.

Over the past three years, The Forge has been developing an innovative programme involving the education and cultural sectors and, most importantly, young people in schools. In practical terms this has led to a £1.3m investment enabling 10 schools across County Durham to work in partnership with high profile cultural organisations based in the region, including BALTIC, Beamish Museum, Dance City, Seven Stories and Durham County Council Libraries, Learning and Culture.

MEDIA CONTACT:

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