

The Power of Pictures in practice

February 2017

Year 1 teacher and KS1 English Co-ordinator, Ann Gelder from Headcorn Primary, shares her experience of training on the project

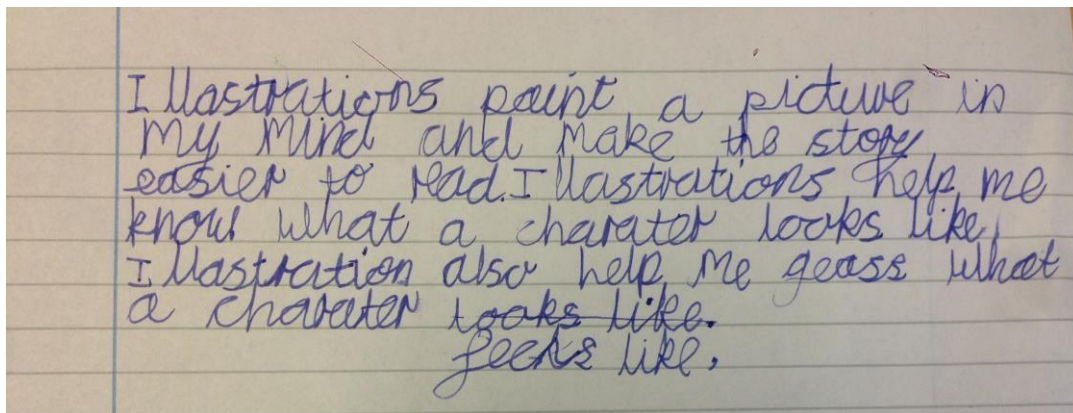
Working with author/illustrator Alexis Deacon on the Power of Pictures course at CLPE on Friday, and bringing the story straight back to the children on the Monday, was such a privilege.



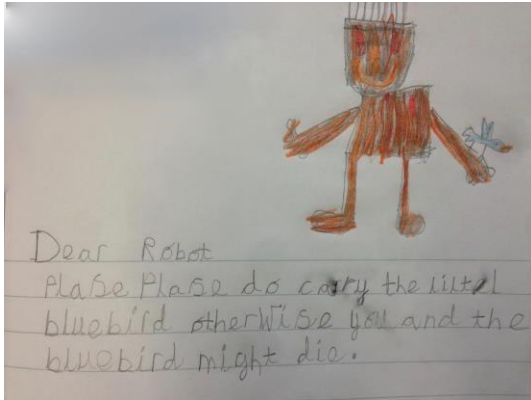
Being shown, by the illustrator, how to capture a likeness to his characters was empowering both for me and then for the children. I will never forget the looks on their faces as the marks that they were making step-by-step on paper resembled the characters they were about to get to know so deeply.

It was as if they were making magic!

Drawing the characters opened a door to getting to know them deeply and enabled the children to write with ease in the first person, from the characters' viewpoint, which can be exceedingly difficult for young children (they often revert to third person narrative).



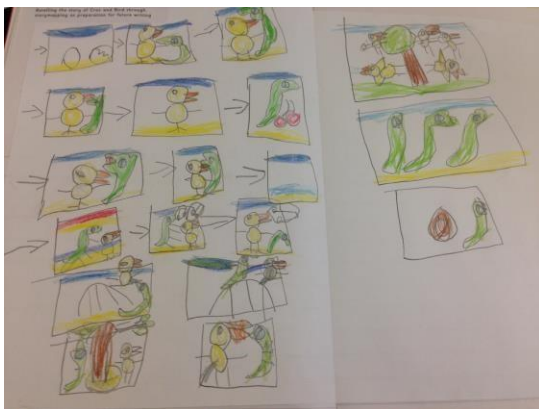
Throughout the book the children were developing empathy, using their visual literacy skills to add depth and substance to their ideas. It was/is very rare to hear a child say "I don't know what to write" because they know the characters and the unfolding story so well.



The pace of a Power of Pictures teaching sequence is also important since it builds up picture upon picture at a pace that allows children thinking time enabling them to organise their ideas prior to writing.

For EAL learners using pictures allows them an equal playing field, understanding the language of pictures without barriers and gaining vocabulary along the way to use in

writing. One EAL child was able to recite the entire book, with expression, and explained to me that he could see the pictures in his head as he told the story. The link between picture and spoken word, followed by written word, is core.



With each new book it has been a joy to witness and share the children's responses, particularly as they become expert in reading a picture. To hear a sentence that begins with "Maybe it's a...", "That could be..." is thrilling, since the children are clearly entering a world of possibility through pictures. This possibility then feeds writing.

At the moment my class is working on *The Fox and the Star* and it is wonderful to hear them share their views on their favourite picture, knowing which comes next. They get excited before the page turns. It is very difficult to put into words, but it is clear that the pictures feed the words and the words the picture in a symbiotic relationship, each adding depth to the other and subsequently to writing.

It has been exciting to see the development of the children's visual literacy from the initial, immediate and self-evident impact of working with a world-class author (in our case Alexis Deacon), through to their increasing sophistication and sensitivity to the nuances of a wider variety of illustrated texts.

Experience Power of Pictures in these ways:

- Use the Power of Pictures website to access **brilliant films** of talented illustrators at work and reading their texts, download **FREE** teaching sequences and view **school examples** of the Power of Pictures in practice www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures
- Read the Power of Reading project evaluation and see how the project has **positively impacted** child learners www.clpe.org.uk/powerofpictures/research

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