

A Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance (BIFF 16) media item:

BILLINGHAM SOUTH COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL GOES BRAZILIAN DANCE CRAZY!

On Friday July 8th a group of young people from Billingham South Community Primary School will be dazzling crowds with a display of Brazilian themed dancing - inspired by the forthcoming Rio 2016 Olympics and the Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance (BIFF).

Over the past couple of months, the whole school, totalling **475** pupils, has taken part in a collective project that looked at the different cultures and heritage of South America. The project was made extra special by visiting creative companies and individual artists delivering workshops at the school.

Every group of young people consisted of mixed ages from four-years to eleven-years old. This was an important aspect to support the development of the children's personal and social education. The children have engaged in a range of skills from using technology, research, designing, silk painting, weaving and dance.

"At Billingham South Community Primary we are very proud to be part of a vibrant school that embraces cultures from all over the world including the 'Arts' - music, drama, art and dance," said Christine Charlton, teacher and art-co-ordinator.

Jessica Smith, community engagement officer for Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance recently visited the school to deliver an exciting dance residency. Over three workshop sessions, the young people were taught some basic Brazilian dance moves, concentrating mainly on the styles of Samba and Capoeira – giving a flavour of lively, rhythmical carnival themed fun. The culmination being a specially choreographed piece of work to be performed at the School's "Olympic Sports Day" (Friday July 8th).

Jessica said: "The children who took part in the residency have been a joy to work with. They have been very responsive, imaginative and enthusiastic. Considering we've only had three sessions to complete our performance piece - the children have worked very hard to make the work fun and exciting!"

Jessica concluded: “The dance residency is an important component for an all rounded education in culture, dance, music, language, history, geography. Not only do we teach the children different dance styles and techniques from various countries, but we also focus on brain, body connectivity, health and wellbeing.

“The Billingham International Folklore Festival offers direct routes to this kind of education, and makes it accessible to local communities and schools. The Festival, steeped in culture, tradition and history is unique to Billingham; and there is nothing quite like it in the UK! The children and families will be able to see the International performers first-hand, when BIFF takes over the town in August.”

Christine Charlton of Billingham South Community Primary School continues by talking about the School’s ongoing relationship with BIFF. She said “Whenever we work with BIFF our aim is always to focus on a country or a selection of countries, either as a whole school or year groups. Children build on their knowledge and skills of the world around them by discovering the culture of their chosen country, for example, the food, music, art, traditions, animals, homes and indigenous people and compare the similarities or differences between their own Communities.”

“We strive to provide as much experience as possible for the children and engage with outside agencies, such as resident artists and educational visits.”

Head Teacher at Billingham South, Mr Edwin Squire, reflected on the school’s mission statement ‘Heart’s in Billingham and Eyes on the World’ and the great importance on creating an environment with strong Community links with events, such as, Billingham International Folklore Festival.

Here’s a summery of the South American project that has evolved at Billingham South Community Primary School. The School’s learning journey began with a collection of workshops with artists from the Red Panda Agency based in London, which included Samba, Capoeira Dancing, Freestyle Football and Percussion.

A group of children have recently taken part in a dance residency, kindly organised and funded by BIFF. The children have also benefitted from percussion workshops with Tees Valley Music Service (TVMS). Year 3 took part in a performance entitled 'Out Of This World' at The Sage Gateshead, and later in July the school will stage a splendid version of "Bugsy Malone" taking place at Billingham Synthonia on 13th and 14th July at 7.00pm.

The South American themed project has been researched, designed and created by the children, as part of their topic work or with the School's resident local artists Shirley Wells and Ben Reche.

The BIFF dance residency performance is just a small part of Billingham South Community Primary School's "Olympic Sports Day" programme. Friday will be jam-packed to the rafters with all things sports and culture including singing, dancing, creative flag-waving, poetry reading, percussion, freestyle football...and a spectacular Carnival parade to launch the start of their Sports Day afternoon.

The 52nd Billingham International Folklore Festival of World Dance will be taking place in the town from 13th to 20th August; welcoming performers from countries all over the world including Chile, Egypt, Martinique, Mexico, North Cyprus, Russia, South Korea and of course the United Kingdom.

For people interested in seeing the full festival line up please visit the website

www.billinghamfestival.co.uk

The website also has an online box office facility, where people can purchase tickets from www.billinghamfestival.co.uk/store You can follow the Festival on social media via Facebook facebook.com/billinghamworlddancefestival and on Twitter @BillFest

For further information about the work produced by Billingham South Community Primary School please visit www.billinghamsouth.com

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