

Kids dance into summer

THE EXCITEMENT of African contemporary dance came to Billingham's schools this month as the Billingham International Folklore Festival was launched with a dance residency programme.

Pupils at Billingham South Community Primary were joined for a week of dance tuition by Keisha Grant of Keneish Dance, a group that will be performing at this summer's festival.

The school's Art Coordinator and Nursery Teacher, Christine Charlton, said: "We're all buzzing. The children are thoroughly enjoying the residency. I think it's wonderful to have this opportunity to be part of the festival and for the children to work together with the wider community."

The sixteen children taking part have been introduced to African dance, improvisation, movement and teamwork.

Keisha added: "The residency is great because we're here for four days and the children are learning to work hard, persevere, be determined, think on their feet and work together. Some of the children have experience of street dance and ballet but the African style of dance is new to them. I'm loving working here - all the children are doing really well."

The pupils from Billingham South will join others from one of the secondary schools to dance alongside the professionals on stage at the festival's Opening Ceremony and at Stockton's ARC.

Olga Maloney, Artistic Director of Billingham Festival, said: "It's very exciting. The children have the chance to try a new form of dance that they haven't encountered before. And they are learning about different cultures too. That's what the festival is all about."

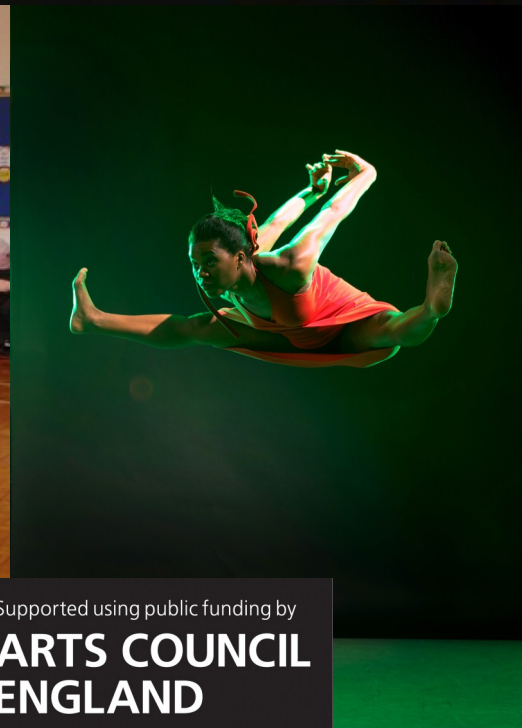
The residency is funded by the National Lottery through Arts Council England.

I-r: Chloe, Lucy A, Abbey, Isla, Erin and Lucy P with Keisha Grant



Keneish

dance



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