



## Pupils check in for first lesson in 'flying' classroom

Pupils at a Stoke-on-Trent school have checked-in for the inaugural lesson in the world's first 'flying' classroom.

At 10am on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> July, pupils boarded the decommissioned commercial airliner, which is now a permanent fixture at Kingsland Primary School in Bucknall, for lessons after it was saved from the scrapheap and kitted out with new whiteboards, desks and laptops so that it could have a new lease of life as a creative learning space.

Thirty 8 and 9-year-old pupils had a special lesson using problem solving skills, in the 22m-long Short S-360 aircraft which used to regularly fly businessmen to Ireland and Spain.

Following on at 2pm, celebrated children's author and former Children's Laureate Michael Morpurgo officially opened the project known as the '[King's Wings](#)' to cap off the groundbreaking project that cost less than the price of a mobile classroom.

Michael Morpurgo said: "What a great idea. I'm all for encouraging enthusiastic inspirational eccentricity in education."

Head teacher David Lawrence said all the pupils and teaching staff were very excited about the first lesson and Michael Morpurgo's visit because it was the culmination of nearly two years' work by the children.



"When we realised we needed an extra classroom we asked the children what they wanted and one little boy said an aeroplane, so we went and found one and have effectively recycled it to create the world's first flying classroom", he said.

'King's Wings' (the children's name for the venture) was the idea of a six year old pupil who responded to the school's creative agent, Paul Hawkins from Creative Partnerships, requesting ideas for an outdoor learning space at the school.

Head teacher David Lawrence continued, "The children have been involved in the design and all aspects of the project management of the King's Wings and will regularly use the aeroplane to help them learn. The children's imagination has been fired up by the idea and they are enthused and motivated, we are sure that this will lead to improved attendance, give us better and more opportunities for our creative curriculum and raise attainment. The project has certainly raised aspirations and has caught the wider community's interest. Our aim is to use the aeroplane as a community learning resource too."

The children have worked alongside a wide range of creative professionals and were inspired by Concorde, which they visited in March 2009. They have been working with one of the UK's leading interior designers, Howard Guy, who designs interiors for industry giants including as Cathay Pacific and Virgin Atlantic, well as Lear Jets for top international VIPs.

The project, supported by Creative Partnerships, first hit the headlines in March 2009 when the aircraft was delivered to the school ([The Sun](#), the [Daily Mail](#), [BBC's Newsround](#)). Kingsland is a Creative Partnerships Change School and is committed to working on projects such as Kings Wings that support the creative development of the whole school. Creative Partnerships ([www.creative-partnerships.com](http://www.creative-partnerships.com)) is the government's flagship



creative learning programme managed nationally by new organisation Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE).

Rachel Billington of Creative Partnerships Stoke-on-Trent said the school had demonstrated the true spirit of creative thinking and making the impossible possible.

"It's not just a fantastic day for everyone connected with the school, but it also puts Stoke-on-Trent on the map as part of the continued regeneration of a region often written off as one of the most deprived parts of the UK," she said. "But it just goes to show that a collaborative approach to creativity can actually be a trailblazer for the next generation of this city."

For more information please visit [www.thekingswings.com](http://www.thekingswings.com).

#### **Notes to editors**

The school has been supported by the following partners:

[Pablo Productions](#)

[Creative Partnerships](#)

[Design Q](#)

[Retro Aviation](#)

**ENDS**

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