

CLORE POETRY AND LITERATURE AWARDS COMMENTARY ON ROUND 2, JANUARY 2012

The Foundation received 202 applications to this second round of the Awards. Almost half the applications came from schools or colleges and the others were from local authorities, libraries and a range of cultural or community organisations. The Foundation made 14 awards totalling £92,598.

As in Round 1, the applications showed a real drive for creativity. There was a continuing commitment to partnerships between writers, cultural organisations, schools and others, in the cause of enabling children and young people to develop their enjoyment of, and way with, words. It was particularly heartening to see the widespread interest in developing approaches to poetry as a source of personal pleasure and inspiration for young people. There was a welcome increase in the number of applications involving strong partnerships with local libraries.

The successful applications shared some common characteristics across their varied purposes and activities:

- They used poetry and literature in exciting and, in some cases, experimental contexts
- The approaches and methods were very carefully set out and detailed in the application
- The majority of successful applications documented evidence of need for the project
- The projects were going to be sustained over a period of time
- Where there was a focus on celebration or performance, it would draw strongly on the work the participants had done earlier in the project
- There was an over-riding emphasis on quality in the experience for the children and young people involved

The Foundation was pleased that the successful applications included:

- Two site-specific projects with a cross-arts focus which included a strong poetry and literature element
- A project looking at classic poetry with young people and enabling them to place the poems in a 'transmedia' anthology
- Three projects focused on intensive work with small groups of young writers
- A project working with children on the art of illustration in poetry
- New work exploring the potential of mobile technology to bring poetry directly into the lives of young people 'on the go'
- The occasional use of the Olympic year as a stimulus and inspiration for creative work
- Projects celebrating poetry, either in-school or beyond, through digital media, magazines and competitions, and so bringing the work to those beyond the project

Comments on the full range of applications:

- There were disappointingly few which promoted serious and creative engagement with works of literature
- Longer quality prose writing rarely featured
- A disappointingly high number failed to demonstrate a need for their project
- Many included an element of celebration of participants' work and performance. The Foundation recognises the value of this, but some of the applications included considerable costs for recording and filming without any real justification for this or an indication of how it would be used to develop future good practice, beyond simply the record of an event
- As in Round 1, the Foundation had concerns about the potential quality of the work deriving from some of the proposed experiences, unless the application showed planning for careful preparation by the teachers and writers involved

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