

# HIGH CRAGS PRIMARY SCHOOL

*"It's not an exaggeration to say that this project has **ignited a love of learning** and opened doors that some of our pupils never thought possible"*



## WHAT WERE YOU LOOKING FOR?

Our school serves a highly diverse community, with many pupils facing significant barriers to learning.

When children enter EYFS, we often see delayed speech, language and communication skills. Many struggle to articulate their thoughts, feelings or experiences, and this can make it difficult for them to access learning with confidence. We knew we needed an approach that would genuinely support:

- pupils who **struggle to communicate opinions, thoughts and feelings**
- **children who were often the least likely to speak, yet who needed to be heard the most**
- engagement that felt meaningful and enjoyable rather than "just another thing"

***The children we most want to speak are often the ones who remain closed books.***



High Craggs Primary  
Leadership Academy

- 44% Pupil Premium
- 19% EAL
- 22 languages spoken
- 22% SEND
- Parents with negative experiences of education
- Limited access to books at home
- Joined The Story Project September 2024

## WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THE STORY PROJECT?

We were drawn to The Story Project because it uses stories as a **safe way** to explore thoughts and feelings, allowing children to talk without feeling pressured.

The programme's use of high quality books, many of which reflect experiences of difference, disability and trauma, help our pupils recognise that others share similar experiences, and that these things are safe to talk about. It also aligned closely with our academic priorities.

We really valued the:

- **built-in inference questions** and opportunities for authorial choice
- **emotional vocabulary grids** available in every lesson
- opportunities to **explore situations from a character's perspective** and apply this to real-life interactions
- the **well-structured lessons** that support staff without increasing workload
- that the programme **complements existing provision** within school

***The fact that it's a literacy-based approach, taught through engaging, colourful storybooks, makes it feel genuinely different from other interventions***



## WHAT IMPACT HAVE YOU SEEN?

Pupils engagement has exceeded our expectations. Compared to traditional PSHE or reading lessons, we have noticed a significant shift: discussions have become more thoughtful, meaningful and rooted in understanding rather than simple comprehension recall.

We are seeing how children are now:

- more **willing to contribute verbally**
- better **able to explain why characters, and they themselves, feel a certain way**
- using a **wider emotional vocabulary** in both discussion and writing
- noticeably **more reflective in their day-to-day interactions**

***Students who once struggled to engage with reading and writing are now excited to tell their own stories. It has given our pupils a voice.***

## WHAT KEY BENEFITS HAVE YOU SEEN?

### 1. Children's emotional understanding

- Broader emotional vocabulary
- Increased confidence expressing feelings
- Emotional language transferring into writing

### 2. Enthusiasm for reading

- High excitement about story choices
- Improved inference and written responses
- Greater enjoyment of story texts, especially in KS2

### 3. Classroom culture and wellbeing

- Increased participation from quieter and SEND pupils
- Higher-quality discussion using evidence from texts
- Improved self-esteem and understanding of wellbeing

### 4. Academic Impact

- Higher-quality written responses
- Stronger inference skills
- Better engagement across the wider curriculum



### FIND OUT MORE

Ready to join our growing community of schools who are doing PSHE differently?

[story-project.co.uk](http://story-project.co.uk)  
[info@story-project.co.uk](mailto:info@story-project.co.uk)

## WOULD YOU RECOMMEND TSP?

Absolutely - **we strongly recommend it**, especially to schools serving communities with high deprivation, low literacy levels and SEMH needs. The programme has had a profound impact not only on academic outcomes but also on wellbeing, confidence and emotional readiness to learn.

The programme has helped our pupils develop the language, confidence and empathy they need to understand themselves and others. Through stories, children feel heard, valued and empowered, often for the first time.

***The ripple effect of storytelling has been profound, supporting not only academic outcomes but also confidence, resilience and aspiration.***