

ASSOCIATE

IAN BILLINGS

“Ian’s approach is a breath of fresh air, comedic air that works to put the ‘fun’ back in to learning the fundamentals”



“A grotty, knotty tale of diddling and confuddling mystery! Who nabbed and nicked the famous Cutglass Cutlass? Set sail on a gigglesome, chuckle-stuffed voyage to find out!” -Sam Hawkins Pirate Detective: The Case of the Cut Glass Cutlass

With all the pressure on you to get literacy right in your school we have just the thing you need...A pantomime-writing, Edinburgh Festival-appearing, Coronation Street-acting, poet and stand-up comic for children who has worked with Bobby Ball and the Chuckle Brothers.

At Independent Thinking we have long known the links between entertainment and education (although we refuse to use the Americanism ‘edutainment’ as a point of principle). Laughter, as Victor Borge once said, is ‘*the shortest route between two people*’ and we have regularly talked of its power to help build relationships in the classroom, diffuse poor behaviour and create the right neurochemistry for learning.

More than that, though, the skills needed to ‘do stand-up’ are also many of the skills needed to engage young people in being creative themselves – telling stories, plays with words, writing in an engaging way, use of humour, use of certain conventions such as pantomime jokes, moving between registers for effect, being brave, communicating with a distinct audience, the list goes on.

What Ian Billings does is draw on his experience around the world making children chuckle through his books, poetry and stand-up comedy and share those techniques and distinctions with teachers and school leaders in a way that adds creativity, sparkle and laughter to the driest of literacy lessons.

What we are asking Ian to do for us is to use his considerable talents to prepare a day-long Masterclass for schools during which he will work with young people in the morning and then follow that up by spending the afternoon with teachers, unpicking what he did, why he did it and why it worked as well as helping teachers explore how they can use the techniques in their own lessons.

Feedback from recent events:

“I feel guilty I was being paid to watch! Just outstanding.”

“Students thoroughly enjoyed the introductory assembly, in case you could not tell by all the laughter, as well as the small workshops. The students walked away from the workshops inspired and excited, which is always the sign of a great lesson.”

“Fabulous to see a presenter reach all levels and ages and groups”

As an actor and a writer of many professional pantomimes along with being a published poet and children’s author (and obviously not forgetting his work for the Chuckle Brothers), Ian has a literary background to go with his ability to get an audience of eight year-olds laughing and hanging on his every word. As such, he is ideally placed to both bring the literary best out of children and to help teachers do the same.

Books written by Ian Billings:

- *Sam Hawkins: Pirate Detective and the Case of the Cut Glass Cutlass*

Ian has been with Independent Thinking since October 2012.

All Independent Thinking Associates are DBS checked.

See our website:
www.independentthinking.co.uk
for more information.