

CALDER HOUSE SCHOOL

Thickwood Lane, Colerne, Near Chippenham, Wiltshire, SN14 8BN

'The process of writing is a complex one. Many of our children come to us fearful of writing: they speak of it as being 'the enemy.' The reasons why they fear writing are many and varied. For many, the process has associations with a bone-dry, over-mechanised process, where their own ideas are peripheralised. Many cannot visualise what it is they wish to write about; those who can do so, have too many ideas to be able to sequence them without becoming mentally over-loaded. Phil, of *Write Inspired*, recognised all of these difficulties. His carefully structured, multi-sensory, writing experiences led our young writers through a delicately-balanced gradient of activities, taking children from word-level to sentence-level work, slowly-but-surely nurturing their self-belief and self-concepts as writers, always sympathetic to their difficulties and aversion to risk.

Inherent to everything Phil does with young writers is not only an impressive understanding of how children best learn (for example, incorporating movement breaks – not as isolated parts of the lesson, but as intrinsic to the way in which language is 'embodied'), but, more importantly, a sensitivity to the pace at which children need to grow their confidence. He quickly established an excellent rapport with children throughout the primary-age range (the oft-repeated mantra being: 'Phil is so cool!'), and provided varied lessons, differentiated to age and ability.

As Director of Studies and Head of English, I am always anxious to re-book Phil for the following academic year (before even the current session has resolved). Not once have I seen him repeat an activity (despite the high standard of each-and-every one); such is his thirst to provide unique experiences every time. His lessons are language-rich, and 'elastic' in the sense of catering to both the most able and most reluctant of writers simultaneously. Phil understands not only that movement and rhythm are at the core of Language, but that they are at the core of ensuring children develop a passion for Language.

Mr I J Perks

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