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## Books by schoolchildren go on display alongside Book of Kells

Books by schoolchildren go on display alongside Book of Kells : Exhibition at Trinity marks culmination of project to encourage young people to write

A group of schoolchildren have just done what many people only ever talk about: they have finished writing their first novels.

Fifth- and sixth-class pupils from inner-city Dublin schools have seen their own creations go on display alongside the Book of Kells and other rare books at [Trinity College Dublin's](#) famous Long Room library.

The exhibition marks the culmination of a programme to encourage Dublin primary schoolchildren to write and illustrate their own books over a two-month period. During that time, they received the assistance of authors, artists and children's book specialists from Trinity.

Titles including *The Talking Pig and the President*, *Shivers in Jellyland* and *Ruction Destruction* have joined the college's permanent collection of more than six million printed books including the works of Oscar Wilde and Bram Stoker .

As well as firing children's imaginations, the project is helping to lift their horizons by introducing them to the world of higher education.

Many of those participating are from schools where only a minority of school-leavers go to third level.

The Bookmarks programme is organised by the Trinity Access Programmes (TAP), which supports students from under-represented backgrounds to progress to further education.

Extracts from the children's books show the quality of the writing and imagination: "The carpet of the house was a big long red tongue," wrote Harley Leeper from St Laurence O'Toole's CBS, Seville Place, Dublin 1.

Oisín Reilly from St Mary's, Haddington Road, Dublin 4, wrote: "He frantically reached for the hammer, but the monster threw the car like an Olympian throwing a javelin."

### New skills

Kathleen O'Toole-Brennan, programmes manager with TAP, said the initiative was a unique opportunity for children to acquire new skills and to be exposed to the world of children's literature in a very hands-on way.

"We are delighted to unveil these beautiful works of art and literature. Our outreach programmes attract over 5,000 students annually, and with continued involvement, these students and their peers will successfully make the transition to both second and third level," she said.

This year the programme focused on the theme "creatures and creations", to mark the 250th anniversary of the birth of Irish author Maria Edgeworth .

Storytelling, writing and illustrating workshops were delivered by writer Catherine Ann Cullen , artist Angela McDonagh, and editor Síne Quinn.

Inspiration for the workshops was provided by staff from Trinity who introduced the children to the Pollard Collection, the largest collection of children's books in Ireland .

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It includes more than 10,000 books dating from the 17th century to the early 20th century. The exhibition will be on display in Trinity's Long Room until April 9th.

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