

The Legends of Sir Bevis, the tales of the famous medieval founder of Southampton, came to life on a VIP night at The Berry Theatre, thanks to enthusiastic performances by pupils of Norwood Primary School and Freegrounds Infant School.

The sold-out show of the thrilling play, penned by the Hedge End theatre's associate writer Matt Beames, was adapted from original medieval texts. The stories were said to be a particular favourite of the young King Henry V and an inspiration to him when he crossed The Channel to take on the French in the Battle of Agincourt 600 years ago.

Four tales were distilled into 10-minute performances created by the 90 pupils from the two primary schools, with videos keeping the story flowing smoothly in between.

All four performances were supported by the Drama Development Team from The Berry Theatre, led by Daniel Hill, who visited the pupils at their schools in a series of educational workshops in the run-up to the show, as part of Eastleigh Borough Council's Culture Unit's two-year Road To Agincourt project.

Dr Cheryl Butler, Head of Culture at Eastleigh Borough Council, said:

*"We are thrilled that our two-year project about Henry V has led to so many different creative responses, and the stories that the children have been inspired to write about Sir Bevis shows how much young talent there is in our local schools."*

The real stars of the show were indeed the fantastic groups of Year 5 pupils, who took such pride transforming Sir Bevis, the love of his life Josian and the giant Ascupart from the stories to the stage.

The packed auditorium rippled with laughter throughout the night thanks to pop-culture references such as the Pink Panther theme tune, a pantomime-style horse appearance and creative adaptations of a dragon, serpent and a giant.

The programme was funded by Agincourt 600 as part of the commemoration around the now legendary battle.

Stories inspired by Sir Bevis written by the children as part of the project will now be digitised and form part of a digital story trail located at libraries across the Borough and Southampton as part of the upcoming Eastleigh Train programme, which is funded by Artswork.