

The Berry Theatre has launched its innovative Story Shuffle creative writing project for 7-11 year olds across ten pairs of schools and libraries in Southampton and Eastleigh.

The project will encourage participating pupils to complete ten writing challenges throughout the Autumn term, which will then be fed into a mobile app, created by local developer, TinRaven.

Once completed, stories in the app will be unlocked by visiting the school's partnering library, allowing the children to read their own individual creations and introducing them to an even wider range of books.

Following an initial workshop with The Berry Theatre's Drama Development team, the schools will use the story of Southampton's legendary hero, Sir Bevis, as the basis for the challenges, devised by the theatre's associate writer, Matt Beames.

As part of the project, pupils will also work towards gaining the Discover Arts Award qualification by learning more about the drama team's day-to-day roles.

Pupils that took part from Freegrounds Junior School in Hedge End were extremely enthused by the workshop, which brought a somewhat forgotten tale back to life.

Sam, age 9, said: *'It's really cool because lots of other places have legends, and I had no idea that Southampton had one.'*

Tom, also age 9, said: *'I feel quite honoured to live in Southampton now!'*

The project has been supported by a £50,000 investment from Southampton-based charity Artswork, along with further funding from Eastleigh Borough Council and Arts Council England.

Story Shuffle forms part of The Berry Theatre's Write Now programme aimed at developing new writers. For more information on Write Now, visit www.theberrytheatre.co.uk/write-now.