

# BookFest Showstopper

**PUPILS** are preparing to write a new chapter of their lives as they help celebrate the power of the word.

**R**EHEARSALS are in full flow at Springfield Academy, as children learn popular singing and dancing routines for a showstopper marking Darlington Libraries' BookFest, an annual celebration of reading.

*"We want to truly celebrate books and stories while offering enjoyable cultural events for children and families."*

*Libraries event manager Suzy Hill*

Eighteen selected pupils from Years 3, 4 and 5 have been working with experts from the Darlington Academy of Performing Arts for five weeks on excerpts of



musicals including Annie, Mary Poppins and Matilda.

Springfield is one of two primary schools in the town which will stage the Imagination show in Darlington Library on February 29 launching a week-long BookFest spectacular in the run up to World Book Day.

*BookFest Week will also feature performance arts and puppetry, children's theatre, family workshops on story boxes, gaming and stop-go animation.*



After the show they will be treated to a celebratory concert featuring the Hootones.

Higher Level Teaching Assistant Cathryn Lee said: "We selected pupils from our performing arts club and they have absolutely loved working with the professionals, writing the script and learning the routines. They have done a fabulous job."

Libraries event manager Suzy Hill added: "We launched BookFest last year to mark World Book Day and as we want our library to be something for children and families.

"We want to truly celebrate books and stories while offering enjoyable cultural events for children and families."

She said the library's programme for under 4s was well-developed and popular. "I've never come across a young child yet who doesn't love books and story-telling," she said.

"But as they get older, somewhere along the line, they can lose confidence and their love of reading so we are targeting older children with initiatives such as these. Reading is so important to their development."

The BookFest Week will also feature performance arts and puppetry, children's theatre, family workshops on story boxes, gaming and stop-go animation.

