

PRIMARY SCHOOL CARTOON WORKSHOPS

18th June 2026



One hundred and twelve Year 5 and 6 Primary School pupils from Cranleigh Primary, Park Mead and St. Cuthbert Mayne were treated to a cartoon workshop at their schools from the renowned cartoonist, Harry Venning.

With their pens at the ready, the pupils were shown how to create facial expressions, using eyes, eyebrows and mouths to demonstrate happiness, surprise, sadness etc. Once they had tried a few for themselves, they went on to create fun characters, including aliens with lots of different features, including one with eight noses. There was no limit to the creativity on show! Harry continued to show them more techniques including how to bring ordinary day objects to life such as an angry toaster popping out shocked toast and then it was on to superheroes. The session culminated in the pupils producing their own comic strips.

It was amazing to see how quickly the children were able to transform a blank piece of paper into an adventure full of humour and create their own original storytelling strip in about ten minutes. The ideas and laughter were flowing.

One of the teachers commented to me that she really struggled with some of her Year 6 pupils to engage in Art and she couldn't believe how quickly they became engrossed in Harry's workshop and what they were able to produce in a short amount of time. Harry was able to give them the confidence to create no matter what their drawing ability and to show them that you do not need to be a great artist to be a cartoonist.

Harry loved the day's workshops and he told me there are few things he enjoys more than grabbing a handful of pens, deserting his desk, striding out into the world and doing some live drawing in front of an audience.

His ability to show school pupils the power of the pen as a means of storytelling and self-expression was inspiring and the Young Arts team are thrilled that, with the financial help, from the Committee that we were able to run this invaluable day of drawing and fun. Harry is an accredited lecturer with the UK Arts Society and his talk *The Art of the Cartoonist* traces the story of cartoons and cartoonists over the last two hundred years, from Hogarth and Gilray to Herjé and Schulz, focusing on those artists who have made an abiding impression upon culture, language, history and, specifically, him.

We were fortunate to have Harry at The Arts Society Cranleigh and hopefully some will remember his talk and live demonstration.

Diana Kay