

The BIG Carnival Case Study

Contents

1.	The Project	3
2.	CPD Sessions	3
3.	Samba Workshops	3-4
4.	Costume Workshops	4
5.	The BIG Carnival – Tuesday 12 th February 2013	4
6.	Carnival in the Curriculum	5-6
7.	Appendix 1	7
8.	Appendix 2	7-8

The Project

The Carnival Archive Project's schools engagement offer for the end of 2012/ beginning of 2013 was entitled The BIG Carnival. It involved supporting schools – through the provision of a CPD session and carnival workshops - to put on their own in-school carnival on 12th February to coincide with those in Rio and Trinidad. In Norfolk 2 schools signed up to take part: Magdalen Gates Primary School in Norwich and Forncett CEVA Primary School, Forncett St Peter.

CPD Sessions

Each school received a 1.5hour CPD session, either as part of an INSET day or as a Twilight session.

It consisted of:

- Introduction to the project, the learning objectives of the session (to understand the origins of carnival; to have more knowledge about the carnivals of Rio and Trinidad; to know where to find supplementary information and resources about carnival; to discover how to integrate carnival across the curriculum and why), and reasons for including carnival in education. (See Appendix 1)
- Presentation looking at the origins and history of carnival, particularly in Rio and Trinidad. (See Appendix 2)
- Practical mask-making activity, using templates from: http://www.firstpalette.com/tool_box/printables/masquerademask.html
- Cutting out from card and decorating with felt-tips, sequins, feathers, coloured paper, etc.
- How to use the archive as a teaching resource.
- Ideas for incorporating carnival into the curriculum.

Samba Workshops

A Samba tutor visited each school twice (full days) to give taster sessions to all pupils. The session involved: going through the different types of instruments in a Samba band, how they are played and the noise they make; clapping rhythms; being assigned an instrument to play then learning the rhythm for their particular instrument; one section starting on their rhythm and then the other sections joining in one at a time until all are playing; practising being loud and quiet and finishing all at the same time. These taster sessions enabled pupils to get a feeling for Samba music, and allowed them

all to play something straight away. Around 30 of those pupils deemed most competent (in both schools the best class was chosen) became their school's Carnival Band, who came together for the afternoon of the second day to practice a performance that they then put on (with the Samba practitioner leading) during their school carnival.

Costume Workshops

A costume artist and assistant (again over 2 full days at each school) from Tin House (<http://www.tinhouse.org.uk/>) worked with the children to make headdresses and/or ribbon batons, using various materials and decorations that were then worn on the day of the BIG Carnival. Forncett Primary also made their own masks and children could make their own costumes at home or wear clothes in the carnival colours of purple, green and gold. The Reception class at Magdalen Gates Primary had made their own masks to wear.

The BIG Carnival

On Tuesday 12th February 2013 both schools put on their own carnival performances.

Forncett Primary: Following the CPD session the school decided that they would have a theme for their carnival – flight - with each class then coming up with their own theme within this, e.g. the ugly bug parade. In preparation, pupils made their masks and the school hall was decorated with balloons and a display ready for their Mardi Gras carnival. On the day of the BIG Carnival, a carnival queen, king and princess were chosen to lead the parade behind the samba carnival band (see section 3), which played with the rest of the school following them around the playground and through the school. Those pupils had been inspired to create their own carnival tune that they first played on recorders and then with the samba instruments. Following on from this, each class performed a piece of carnival poetry and then sang their carnival song (the tune of a favourite song of the school's with lyrics re-written by the Head teacher). Parents were then invited to stay for a Mardi Gras Menu lunch, and in the afternoon a cookery demonstrator showed the pupils how to make chicken gumbo and king cakes.

Magdalen Gates Primary: The school held a carnival afternoon which began with the samba carnival band putting on a performance watched by the rest of the school, all wearing the headdresses they had made in their workshops.

Carnival in the Curriculum

There are many opportunities to incorporate carnival into the curriculum, allowing for a lot of cross-curricular work. For example:

MUSIC

- Caribbean song forms – Calypso, Rapso, Soca, Steel Band, Samba
- Performing & listening

DANCE & DRAMA

- Caribbean and Latin American dance
- 'Playing mas' linked to a theme – role-play and characterisation

ART

- Work in a variety of media, e.g. paint, clay, papier-mâché, tie dye, collage, fabric painting
- Carnival-related artwork – representative/themes/colour and pattern
- Costume- and mask- designing

DT

- Making masks, costumes, floats, percussion instruments

ICT

- Carnival Archive website; Research; Design

LITERACY

- Stories, poems and calypsos
- Oral tradition/story-telling

HISTORY

- Origins and development of carnival
- History of slavery, colonialism, and emancipation
- Post-war immigration in the UK
- Local histories of carnival
- Oral history

GEOGRAPHY

- Locations of carnival
- Route of carnival processions

RE

- Christian tradition and carnival
- Shrove Tuesday/Mardi Gras and Lent

CITIZENSHIP

- Celebrating diversity
- Community collaboration

MFL

- French and Portuguese

Appendix 1

Why Carnival in Education?

- Carnival has both cultural and historical significance.
- Carnival is an inclusive learning experience covering a range of curriculum tasks.
- Carnival promotes creativity.

Performing Arts & Carnival in Initial Teacher Education and Schools:

HEARTS [Higher Education, the Arts & Schools] Project at Goldsmiths, University of London 2005-2006

- 'This was an opportunity to develop an inclusive, relevant, multicultural curriculum.'
- 'Carnival supported the development of children's imagination.'
- 'Because of the diversity of activities that are included in carnival it covers very many learning styles and involves many collaborative activities so that all children without exception can be included at some level.'

www.carnivalineducation.com/

Appendix 2

History of Carnival

Earliest mention of Lenten carnival celebration is in 12th Century Rome. Easter was one of the most important dates in the Catholic calendar and the church decided that to properly prepare for it there should be a period of fasting and good behaviour leading up to it – Lent. So as on Shrove Tuesday when we use up ingredients like flour and eggs to make pancakes, it was thought a good idea to have a celebration before this 40 days (excluding Sundays) started.

The Feast of Fools (as seen in *The Feast of Fools* by Pieter Bruegel, c.1570) was a popular medieval festival amongst the clergy that took place before Lent and involved parody of religious authority by younger members. They chose a mock pope/bishop to reign as Lord of Misrule. Carnival was and continues to be a form of escapism where you can become someone or somebody else, imitate or parody, without fear of reprisal.

The word carnival comes from the Latin *Carnem Levare*, meaning to remove oneself from flesh

or meat (something that was given up for Lent). In Italian it became *carnevale* (flesh farewell), and then in Spanish and Portuguese *carnaval*, in German *karneval*, and in English *carnival*.

Carnival developed in Italy in the 16th Century where masquerade balls were popular and people wore masks and costumes. They became famous and spread to other Catholic countries in Europe. As these countries started to colonise countries in the Americas (late 16th/early 17th Centuries), they took with them their religion and associated celebrations.

When these countries became free from colonial rule carnival continued and got bigger, in part, because slaves who had witnessed but couldn't join in with celebrations were now free and could have their own, bringing their own culture and influences.

Carnival disciplines (mas/masquerade; calypso; steelpan; floats; majorettes; samba; marching bands; mobile/static sound systems) come together with other art forms, such as music, dance, visual art and theatre, to produce what the carnival sector refers to as the "Greatest Show on Earth".

In traditional English carnivals, the carnival king or queen is a young person chosen to represent the carnival for that year, performing certain duties and leading the procession. However, in Caribbean and Brazilian carnivals the king and queen are those that lead their carnival band (group) and wear the major (biggest, most elaborate) costumes. Here the carnival 'royalty' are followed by a section(s), each with 25-80 participants. Carnival is a visual story and using costumes helps tell this story.

Carnival is more than just one day; it is weeks and months of preparation. Mas camps are where the community meet to create their costumes and decorate their floats.

Information taken from:

'Carnival in Europe & the Americas,' Barbara Mauldin, in *Carnival!* Barbara Mauldin, ed. (London: Thames & Hudson Ltd., 2004)

'Carnival: an introduction'

www.carnivalarts.org.uk/ukCarnivalSector/GuidanceampResources.aspx

Rio

- African and Amerindian influences.
- Parade is made up of samba schools (social clubs representing a particular neighbourhood). Schools have floats, costumes, etc. to represent their theme (enredo) and a percussion band (bateria).
- Samba is a Brazilian dance of African origin and a Brazilian genre of music.
- The samba parade takes place in the purpose-built Sambodromo.

Trinidad

- African influence developed through Canboulay (from the French *cannes brulées*), a burning of the sugar cane celebration. After Emancipation it developed into a festival for those indentured labourers and free slaves who could not take part in the colonial carnival events.
- Parade is made up of mas bands; when someone takes part they are said to be "playing mas."