

The kids are all right

“The Inbetweeners Movie”

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times as many tickets as its most high-profile competition, “Cowboys & Aliens”. It went on to beat all comers for a month before it was eventually deposed by “Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy”. So far, it has made £41.8m—an astounding figure.

The two films that have raked in the most money at the British box office this year are “Harry Potter And The Deathly Hallows: Part 2” and “The King’s Speech”. No surprises there. The shocker is that third place has been taken by “The Inbetweeners Movie”, a spin-off of an acclaimed but hardly ubiquitous E4 sitcom. On its opening weekend in mid-August it far outsold any of the other films released that week, accounting for more than seven

Newcomers who are intrigued by this phenomenal success story might be flummoxed when they see the film. For three series, the sitcom was a consistently funny, deeply rude and fundamentally sweet portrayal of four suburban sixth-formers’ failure to get themselves girlfriends. “The Inbetweeners Movie”, which follows on directly from the third series, doesn’t bother establishing who these sixth-formers are. It assumes the viewer will know already. It doesn’t have any more plot than the average episode of the series. And apart from a few helicopter shots of the Greek resort the lads visit after they’ve left school, it doesn’t serve up anything very cinematic. It feels much more like a TV special than a big-screen film, something to be watched in your sitting room on Christmas Day. But in a summer of superheroes and special effects, perhaps bored young Brits were just happy to see a well-made, uncynical bit of entertainment that seemed to be aimed squarely at them, rather than at a focus group in a Californian shopping mall.

So far the film has only been released in Britain and Ireland. There are two big questions now: first, how well will “The Inbetweeners Movie” go down in other countries, where it won’t benefit from the same brand recognition? Second, how well might it do at the BAFTA awards ceremony in February? Two months ago, no one would have expected the film to enter the minds of awards voters. Now it would be a downright snub if a body dedicated to celebrating British cinema didn’t give a trophy or two to the British film which has done better than anyone would have imagined.

“The Inbetweeners Movie” is out now in Britain and Ireland.