CREATIVE SCHOOLS PARTNERSHIP

FINAL EVALUATION REPORT

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Annabel Jackson Associates Ltd
Evaluators
The Priory
54 Lyncombe Hill
Bath BA2 4PJ
Somerset
Tel: 01225-446614
Email: ajataja@aol.com
Website: www.AnnabelJacksonAssociates.com

Contents

SUMMARY 4
Background 4
Purpose 5
Methodology 5
Key findings 5
Conclusions and Recommendations 10
INTRODUCTION 12
Background 12
Purpose 12
Methodology 12
Epistemology 12
Structure of the case studies 13
PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE 14
Introduction 14
Have focused objectives linked to strategy 14
Have a project manager working four days a week 14
Employ professional artists 14
Choose targeted group of students 15
Have a sustained engagement 15
Have multiple contacts in the school including the principal 15
Have an external evaluator appointed from the start 15
Link to arts venues 15
Involve parents 16
Have teachers in the sessions as equal partners 16
Bring schools together 16
Think reflexively 16
Maximise legacy 17
CONCEPTUALISATION 18
Introduction 18
Explanation of logic models 19
Language 19
Logic model 19
SCHOOL 1: MERCY COLLEGE 21
Context 21
Objectives 21
Description 22
Evaluation 22
Outcomes for parents 29
SCHOOL 2: ST JOSEPH BOYS SCHOOL 31
Context 31
Objectives 32
Description 32
Evaluation 32
SCHOOL 3: ST. VINCENT'S CENTRE 37
Context 37
Objectives 37

Description 37
Evaluation 38
SCHOOL 4: ST. CECILIA'S COLLEGE 42
Context 42
Objectives 42
Description 42
Evaluation 43
SCHOOL 5: ASHFIELD BOYS HIGH SCHOOL 47
Context 47
Objectives 47
Description 48
Evaluation 49
SCHOOL 6: ASHFIELD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL 54
Context 54
Objectives 54
Description 54
Evaluation 55
SCHOOL 7: BELFAST MODEL FOR GIRLS 58
Context 58
Objectives 58
Description 59
Evaluation 59
SCHOOL 8: BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE 64
Context 64
Objective 64
Description 65
Evaluation 65
Outcomes for students 66
SCHOOL 9: MALONE INTEGRATED COLLEGE 69
Context 69
Objectives 69
Description 70
Evaluation 70
SCHOOL 10: ST. COLM'S HIGH SCHOOL 73
Context 73
Objectives 73
Description 74
Evaluation 74
CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION 77
Conclusions and Recommendations 77
APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES 79

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SUMMARY

BACKGROUND

The Creative Schools Programme is a pilot programme run by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in collaboration with the Education Authority and Urban Villages Initiative. It aims to improve outcomes for disadvantaged young people through creative participation. The partnership meets a collective ambition to improve community cohesion, support government priorities and reduce educational inequalities.

The Urban Villages Initiative is designed to improve community relations and develop thriving places where there has been a history of deprivation and tension. It is a headline action within the Together: Building a United Community (TBUC) Strategy, one of the Northern Ireland Executive's key strategy objectives within the Programme for Government (PfG).

The five Urban Village areas are:

- Ardoyne and Greater Ballysillan (North Belfast).
- Colin (West Belfast).
- Lower Part of the Newtownards Road – known as Eastside (East Belfast).
- Sandy Row, Donegall Pass and the Markets areas (South Belfast).
- The Bogside, Bishop Street and Fountain (Derry / Londonderry).

Community consultation and wider stakeholder has informed the creation of Strategic Frameworks that identify the challenges and strengths of each place. These frameworks are designed to join up delivery by central and local government and wider stakeholders in support of the TBUC Strategy's overarching priorities as well as PfG outcomes.

The Creative Schools Programme supported activities within 10 schools, all of which are located either within a core area or wider areas of influence. The core area provides a focal point for action and investment within each area. The concept of a wider area of influence, that is not sharply defined, acknowledges that thriving places require wider connection to both physical and social assets.

The programme goals were to:

- Strengthen relationships between young people, post-primary schools and the local community.
- Support young people in contributing positively to the communities in which they live.
- Use creativity as a tool to address school development priorities.
- Support post-primary school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people using creative arts.

- Develop understanding and learning through shared practice events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Conceptualise the programme using a logic model.
- Use evaluation approaches to capture the narrative of the programme.
- Capture the learning from the programme to help with planning and dissemination.

METHODOLOGY

My methodology consisted of:

- Reviewing documentation including policy background, plans, applications and internal evaluation.
- Interviewing teachers, artists and other partners and students.
- Facilitating a learning seminar.

KEY FINDINGS

THE PROGRAMME HAD A STRONG IMPACT ON THE YOUNG PEOPLE

Interviews with young people suggested a complex pattern of interlinked outcomes and mechanisms. The main outcomes and mechanisms described were:

The programme enhanced mental health and wellbeing through:

- Creating a fun, playful environment.
- Enabling students to externalise feelings and experiences and so gain perspective.
- Creating a non-judgmental environment (also relevant to other outcomes).
- Helping students to channel their feelings positively.
- Giving a route for students to express themselves and in some cases experience catharsis (also relevant to other outcomes).
- Giving students a method (e.g. drawing, visiting a gallery) to manage their emotions.
- Creating a soothing effect by the use of arts materials (e.g. the tactile effect of clay, the visual impact of colour).
- Refining students' ability to make choices (e.g. characterization in drama or debriefing processes).
- Giving students an increased sense of control over their lives.
- Generating intense concentration and so distracting participants from their problems.

- Placing students in/near nature for some activities (e.g. drawing or pottery-making).
- Giving students individual attention, which is not possible with large class sizes.

Students increased their confidence on the programme through:

- Feeling that their individuality was understood and appreciated.
- Feeling their ideas were valued.
- Trying out different identities (e.g. through drama).
- Being given responsibility (e.g. interviewing members of the public for a newspaper or film, being entrusted with expensive items of equipment such as cameras).
- Improving their communication skills by learning specific skills (e.g. voice projection, open body language, interviewing questions).
- Finding they could talk to people outside their usual friendship group.
- Finding that they already had valuable skills they didn't know they had (e.g. visual acuity from using social media).
- Feeling special from being included in an arts project and present at launch events.
- Receiving praise and encouragement.
- Replacing voices of internal criticism with a voice saying ' you can do it".
- Feeling more powerful because of a potential impact on an audience.
- Gaining a sense of achievement from e.g. being in a film, on a stage, in print or in an exhibition.
- Having - through the arts - a broad range of possibilities to find their special talent.
- Producing artwork that they could take home to show their families.

The programme increased students' interest in learning through:

- Strengthening students' thinking skills (e.g. their ability to deal with complexity and ambiguity).
- Showing students that they could concentrate for long periods of time when they were interested.
- Avoiding the frustration students feel when some members of the group don't want to engage and so disrupt learning for all.
- Suiting different learning styles (e.g. learning by doing, sense-based learning).
- Teaching step-by-step processes (e.g. for writing, drawing, interviewing, cooking).
- Giving a framework for children to be more comfortable to give and receive feedback (e.g. because of the fast decision-making process in animation).
- Developing students' problem-solving skills.

- Giving instant results (e.g. in animation).
- Giving time for students to develop their work to the stage where they were satisfied with it and so were more aware of what could be achieved with dedication and effort.
- Increasing students' motivation by showing the real world importance of the subjects (e.g. of writing in journalism, cooking in the hospitality sector).
- Giving positive role models (e.g. of local businesses, artists).
- Taking children to arts venues and other places that were previously outside their experience.

All students interviewed felt strongly that schools should continue to offer these kinds of projects and that any schools that failed to do so was letting young people down.

THE PROGRAMME SUPPORTED TEACHERS

Teachers mentioned these outcomes from the programme. They:

- Developed their knowledge of specific artforms e.g. how to work to a high quality cost-effectively.
- Learnt techniques to motivate students.
- Saw the benefit of a sustained project or learning activity.
- Saw how naturally children learnt through creative approaches.
- Strengthened their interest in using creative approaches across the curriculum.
- Built confidence for even more ambitious projects in the future.
- Created learning resources that can be used for other classes.
- Had a positive context for making contact with parents.
- Develop relationships with local businesses.
- Developed connections with and understanding of the practice of local artists and arts organisations.
- Identified ways film and other artforms could be used in assessment.
- Improved their morale.

THE PROGRAMME BROUGHT GROUPS AND COMMUNITIES TOGETHER

The programme brought groups and communities together through:

- Creating neutral spaces in which friendships could develop.
- Giving a shared experience of an intense and intensive project.

- Increasing empathy through e.g. character or narrative development, interviewing or considering the audience.
- Demonstrating or requiring interdependency because of safety or other practical requirements.
- Participants realising that other people are a source of ideas, knowledge and support, and that working together is easier than struggling alone.
- Learning about other cultures.
- Changing hierarchies in the group, (e.g. with those who were usually non achievers helping those who were more academic).
- Displaying an artwork that symbolizes sharing and co-existence.

We did not measure the impact on local communities – and this would have been an exceptional outcome given the short length of the projects. However interviewees mentioned these mechanisms that support social cohesion and regeneration. The programme:

- Raised participants' aspirations and created images or experiences that inspired other students and in some cases families.
- Raised the status of the arts with this group of students and so gave students interested in creative careers a greater feeling that they had a place in the school and community.
- Communicated creative values around originality that embody respect for individuality and difference.
- Implied a complex view of place that allows for pride in history and community, combined with an openness to new ideas and horizons.
- Gave students the experience of, and interest in, travelling outside their communities.
- Gave students the confidence and independent thought to question the prejudices of their parents.
- Helped engage all students in learning and so reduced feelings of disadvantage.
- Showed children that there were enjoyable and rewarding jobs in creative fields that they could find or develop for themselves.
- Brought students and families from different backgrounds together in a positive and bonding experience that went beyond religion.
- Helped create cohesion across newly integrated schools.
- Gave parents positive experiences of schools that might override negative associations from their own schooling.
- Strengthened the link between students and teachers so that the students were more willing to accept help and had someone to talk to if they had problems.
- Made the schools more visible in the local community.

THE PROGRAMME EXEMPLIFIED MANY ASPECTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Although this is a pilot programme, the expertise of the project team means that the project already exhibits many features of good practice.

AJA PRINCIPLE	SCORE	RATIONALE
Have focused objectives linked to strategy	10	Objectives were all clear, focused and drawn from School Improvement Plans.
Have a project manager working three to four days a week	8	The Programme Coordinator was extremely experienced and dedicated. Several schools said they could not have taken on the project without her support. However, the amount of time she needed exceeded that allocated.
Employ professional artists	10	Partly because of the contacts of the programme coordinator, each project employed artists with strong skills.
Choose a targeted group of students	10	The schools chose students individually according to their suitability to the project. In a couple of cases the teachers realised the number they had selected was too many to match the detailed support required and so split the group part the way through the project.
Have a sustained engagement	10	All projects included more than a one-off engagement. There was substantial evidence of the benefit from this depth of work.
Have multiple contacts in the school including the principal	10	Partly because of the structure given by the programme coordinator, all principals were aware of the programme and committed to it.
Have an external evaluator appointed from the start	8	We are independent. However we were not appointed from the start.
Link to arts venues	7	Six projects took students to arts venues. I would like to see more thought given to ways to build and maintain these relationships.
Involve parents	7	Some of the projects had detailed, meaningful and highly positive encounters with parents. More will be possible with greater time.
Have teachers in the sessions as equal partners	7	All teachers we interviewed were very committed to the project and put a considerable amount of work into it. All have areas of their practice they would like to change as the result of the project. I would like to see more time given to

		supporting teachers to make this aspiration a reality.
Bring schools together	7	The learning meetings were delayed because of the late start of the programme. Only one meeting took place, in June 2018.
Think reflexively	7	The teachers identified ways the school could better engage the students in class through the use of creative learning. Principals showed strong interest in the programme. More could be done to create a positive environment for schools to develop creative learning approaches.
Maximise legacy	7	Each team identified legacies from their projects. A future programme should do more to plan for and support legacies from the start.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

CONCLUSIONS

The pilot was a success in terms of the individual project objectives and outcomes for students and parents.

The pilot engaged 180 children in a sustained participation and reached a wider group through performances, exhibitions and conversations. This gives a unit cost of £333 per funder, which seems exceptional value given the contact hours and the transformative effect on some of the students.

The programme exemplified good practice in schools creativity. The quality of the projects was substantially higher than we would expect from a pilot programme, which we attribute to the experience of the project coordinator and contacts in the Arts Council.

The late start of the programme, which pushed work to the busiest time of the school calendar, reduced the scope for wider impacts – on families and communities - to develop. Launching the programme in September/October will give more time for planning and relationship-building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The programme should be continued with an initial term of three years.
2. The structure should be: the existing ten schools should be funded for the three years to continue to embed creativity in learning (across the arts departments, in other departments, and to apply lessons about how to engage specific students) and also to act as ambassadors to a wider group of schools; applications for project funding should

be organised for years two and three, with the aim of bringing a wider group of schools into the programme.

3. The good practice points of the pilot programme should be retained: clear objectives linked to School Improvement Plans, careful choice of a targeted group of young people, employment of professional artists, sustained engagement prioritising depth over breadth, and multiple contacts within the schools including principals.
4. Application criteria should be extended to ask about what contact with parents is planned during project delivery.
5. A project coordinator should be appointed for the length of the programme.
6. A programme evaluator should be appointed for the length of the programme. The evaluation should include follow up evaluation of students to see if outcomes were sustained.
7. The schools should give more attention to legacy. Project teams should have an explicit discussion about legacy at the start of the project and should create a legacy plan that includes opportunities identified as the project evolves.
8. The programme should include a set of events to share and develop learning. Subjects should include: the importance and process of using creativity in schools; how artists and teachers can work together to support the development of both; how to involve parents in projects; and how to use projects to bring new audiences to arts organisations.

INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

The programme goals were to:

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- Support young people in contribute positively to the communities in which they live.
- Use creativity as a tool to address school development priorities.
- Support post-primary school leaders and teachers to meet the needs of disadvantaged young people using creative arts.
- Develop understanding and learning through shared practice events.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the evaluation was to:

- Conceptualise the programme using a logic model.
- Use evaluation approaches to capture the narrative of the programme.
- Capture the learning from the programme to help with planning and dissemination.

METHODOLOGY

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- Reviewing documentation including policy background, plans, applications and internal evaluation.
- Interviewing teachers, artists and other partners and students.
- Facilitating a learning seminar.

The fieldwork for the evaluation was carried out over five days. The plan was to interview students in five schools, but the strong organisation of the programme meant I managed to interview students in seven schools.

EPISTEMOLOGY

This evaluation adopts a Scientific Realist epistemology as described by Pawson and Tilley (1997) [1]. This suits the arts because:

[1] Pawson, Ray (2006) *Evidence-based Policy. A Realist Perspective*. London: Sage.

- It provides an iterative structure to build up a understanding of programmes in terms of their mechanisms, elements, contexts, and outcomes. Instead of asking 'did the programme work?' it asks 'where does the programme work, in what form, for which people, and in which contexts?' This nuanced conceptual structure suits the arts because projects and engagements are not standardised and have an element of uniqueness.
- Consistent with the values of the arts, it sees participants as active agents in their own transformation, not passive subjects. Programmes are seen as "offering chances which may (or may not) be triggered into action by the subject's capacity to make choices."
- Its model of causality values context. Pawson and Tilley argue that traditional positivist approaches, which infer cause from co-variance between aggregate variables, ignore conditional and contingent factors. Quoting Guba and Lincoln (1989, p60), they suggest that: 'Experimentation tries to minimalize all the differences (except one) between experimental and control groups and thus "effectively strips away the context and yields results that are valid only in other contextless situations.' " (1997, p22).

There are two basic theories of causality:

- The Successionist Theory of Causality sees the world as inherently mutable, and conceives causality as the co-existence of two independent phenomena.
- The Generative Theory of Causality argues that mechanisms within events lead to the effect.

Scientific Realism draws from the Generative Theory of Causality where "mechanisms are the engines of explanation" (Pawson, 2006). In this evaluation I have used personal testimonies that describe mechanisms as a route to attribution. This approach has the advantages of speed; respect for the voice of the interviewee; and a link to verbatim theatre.

STRUCTURE OF THE CASE STUDIES

In the case studies below I have:

- Reworded some of the objectives given in the application form to distinguish between means and ends.
- Used quotes from interviewees, especially young people, to ensure their voice is heard in the evaluation process.
- Carried out content analysis of interview material to identify themes and patterns.
- Used case studies to illustrate different aspects of the programme and subject rather than to compare the projects.

PRINCIPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

INTRODUCTION

These principles are derived from my work evaluating creative schools projects for twenty years, including my book that places creative schools projects and participative practice at the heart of new audience development[2]. This section applies mainly to dedicated arts projects. However, some also apply to the wider aim of using creative approaches across the curriculum, which can be seen as a second stage in harnessing the arts for the benefit of students' learning and wellbeing.

HAVE FOCUSED OBJECTIVES LINKED TO STRATEGY

The arts are powerful. Having an eye on high-level important objectives avoids the potential risk of trivialising or dissipating the potential impact of arts engagement. Having precise objectives gives a clear guide to selecting the right artform, each of which has a slightly different flavour and potential.

HAVE A PROJECT MANAGER WORKING FOUR DAYS A WEEK

A skilled project manager will make an important contribution to the quality and impact of creative schools programmes. They will encourage applications from schools most in need of the arts – often those most lacking in capacity. They will help match schools to artists who suit their needs and style of working. They will provide advice on planning and good practice in arts projects. They will support and facilitate evaluation. They will provide a common thread between projects. Some of this support is practical, and some pastoral, helping teachers to continue when they are already over-stretched. The four days a week is specified because of the potential benefit an arts specialist can give to a programme like this and also because of the need for responsiveness: replying within a day not a week.

EMPLOY PROFESSIONAL ARTISTS

One of the unintended positive consequences of the weakening of arts teaching in schools is the opportunities that arise for working with professional artists and arts organisations. Employing professional artists who are also skilled facilitators is one of the best ways of ensuring quality in the project. Professional artists have much to contribute to the students: they usually model forms of openness and experimentation, often with a very strong intellectual or conceptual basis that those unfamiliar with the arts might find surprising; they make a link to the world of work – or even of celebrity - that is motivating for pupils; and they can often pass on detailed practical advice that helps teachers in their practice.

[2] https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/imagining-arts-organizations-for-new-audiences/

CHOOSE TARGETED GROUP OF STUDENTS

Schools often want to spread the benefit across a whole year group in order to achieve equity. While this is an understandable aim, impact is likely to be higher if the school chooses individuals based on their relationship to the identified strategic objective.

HAVE A SUSTAINED ENGAGEMENT

This principle underpins the previous one. Having four groups of children each attend one workshop is likely to have lower impact than having one group of children attend four workshops. Building students' ownership of the process and product – which I would see as a route to greater impact - takes time. Developing skill takes time, it requires trial and error. Building relationships between artists and students, and between students themselves, takes time. Building a habit of attending a theatre or gallery takes time.

HAVE MULTIPLE CONTACTS IN THE SCHOOL INCLUDING THE PRINCIPAL

If sustainability is one of the indicators of success in creative schools programmes, and I believe it is, then projects need to have multiple roots in the school if they are to flourish in the long term.

HAVE AN EXTERNAL EVALUATOR APPOINTED FROM THE START

Evaluation can help to clarify objectives, identify hidden assumptions, create customised ways of measuring outcomes, structure and capture learning, and document the process and outcomes. Evaluators need to be appointed from the start so that schools know what will be expected from them and have a structure for reflection.

LINK TO ARTS VENUES

One of the themes of my books is that participative practice can build skills, connections and emotions that pave the way for arts engagement.

"Learning about the arts in childhood is correlated with, and assumed to predict, future arts attendance.[3] Without this foundation, people are less equipped to have a meaningful experience of the arts, despite the best endeavors of arts organizations." Imagining Arts Organizations[4]

[3] There are many sources for this claim, but see the analysis of Novak-Leonard and Brown (2011) for National Endowment for the Arts; and Zakaras and Lowell (2008) for The Wallace Foundation.
[4] https://www.phf.org.uk/publications/imagining-arts-organizations-for-new-audiences/

INVOLVE PARENTS

There are many reasons to involve parents in creative learning programmes. Creative projects provide a positive and celebratory way of talking to parents about their child's accomplishments - an opportunity that might be rare for non-academic or disengaged students, an opportunity that might be particularly heart-felt because of the personal nature of creativity for the children, the extent to which they put themselves into the work. Helping parents to become invested in their child's education is, of course, one of the proven ways of helping children's education. Helping parents to become interested in the arts is one of the rare routes to drawing non-attenders into the arts as part of new audience development. This is too good an opportunity to miss.

HAVE TEACHERS IN THE SESSIONS AS EQUAL PARTNERS

I believe that this relationship between teachers and artists needs greater attention and deliberateness in school arts programmes. At present, practice varies widely from: at one extreme, where teachers assume the whole package is outsourced to the artist and don't contribute to the planning or delivery of any of the workshops; a middle ground where teachers organise sessions before and after the workshop; to a rare ideal where teachers and artists work together with students as co-creators. The relationship is important to: embeds skills more deeply in the school, to ensure that the project is customised to the needs of the school, to model the collaborative nature of the creative process – which is one of its most unique aspects - and to restore the status of teachers as artist in their own right. Most of the projects I evaluate across the UK involve the teacher observing some aspect of the workshop, but fall short of this ideal.

BRING SCHOOLS TOGETHER

Where schools have designed projects around a common theme, bringing teachers and students together - or even creating a combined or collaged artwork - showcases the wide vista of creativity. Where schools have carried out projects at the same time, bringing teachers together can help to build knowledge and momentum. Bringing schools who have participated in a programme together with those who have yet to participate or express an interest to participate can help to create a ripple effect of awareness and interest.

THINK REFLEXIVELY

Reflexivity is the important concept of bi-directional or mutually beneficial relationships. I use this principle to suggest that creative schools programmes should not be interventions that are directed only at students' learning. All stakeholders – funders, principals, teachers, and artists - should have time in the programme to reflect on the meaning of the project for their practice and thinking.

MAXIMISE LEGACY

This principle underpins and brings together all the other principles. Action taken during the project can give deliberateness to legacy. Maximising legacy can include:

- Discussing the project with or showcasing the results to other teachers, especially those teaching non-arts subjects.
- Discussing the project with or showcasing the results to other students, especially those who might not consider themselves artistic.
- Creating teaching resources and making them accessible e.g. online, to reduce the time for other teachers to develop similar projects.
- Creating a permanent artwork and displaying it in the school.
- Using the artwork as part of the school's communication or identity, for example, in a prominent position on its website, or as a logo for an area of work.
- Commissioning and publishing an evaluation report, especially one that gives guidelines for other projects.
- Identifying future journeys for participants, which might include career visits or advice, after school clubs, follow on projects (especially those where participants progress to becoming mentors to a new intake), youth fora for venues, or support so that students can organise their own visits to venues.
- Inviting policy-makers and other decision-makers to observe key moments in the process so that they can see for themselves the power of the arts.

CONCEPTUALISATION

INTRODUCTION

Evaluation is composed of four interlinked strands:

- **Thinking**. Framing, focusing, conceptualising, interpreting, synthesising.
- **People**. Motivating, training, involving, reassuring, listening, informing, influencing
- **Systems**. Planning, gathering data, entering data on a computer, analysing data, disseminating information.
- **Action**. Making recommendations, implementing recommendation.

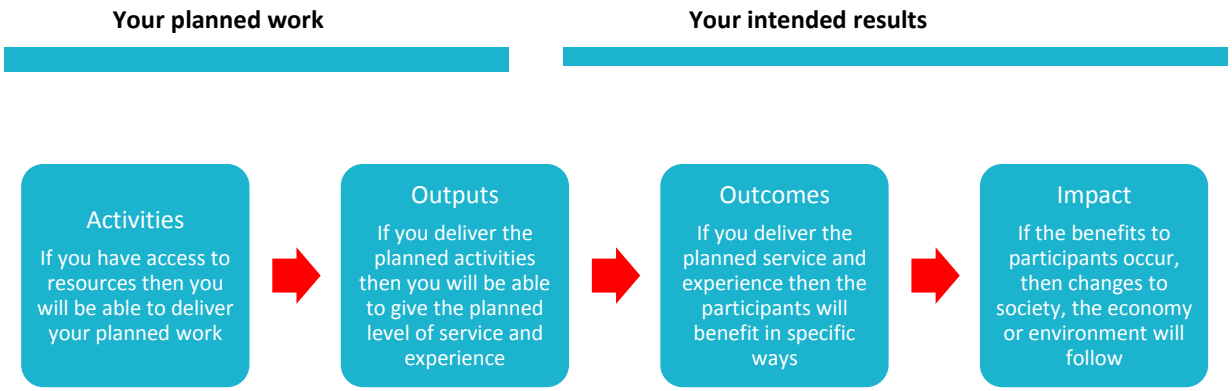
It is common for arts organisations and others to equate evaluation with Systems (methods) and not plan for the other crucial elements of the system.

Evaluative thinking has these benefits:

- **Ensuring a clear direction**. The process of creating a logic model helps to generate a group consensus about the precise intended outcomes.
- **Creating a lean evaluation system**. Being precise about intended outcomes and critical success factors helps evaluation to focus on key questions.
- **Bringing the different elements of the evaluation system together**. Articulating the theory of change helps test the implied connection between actions and expected outcomes, and results in a balanced evaluation system that covers both.
- **Testing the logic behind the programme**. The logic model session helps check that the ideas behind the programme are sound and can identify potential hurdles in its delivery. Clear thinking strengthens not just the evaluation but also the implementation of a programme.
- **Ensuring expectations are realistic**. The logic model shows the chain of logic and therefore graphically and so illustrates the time lag between short terms outcomes, long term outcomes and impact.
- **Customising the evaluation**. The logic model helps ensure that the evaluation captures what is special about the programme.
- **Summarising the project**. The logic model gives a concise description of the programme in a form that shows its rationale.
- **Providing a structure to capture programmatic learning**. Comparing what happens with what was expected or planned leads naturally to questions about programmatic lessons.

EXPLANATION OF LOGIC MODELS

A logic model is a visual depiction of a programme or project. Logic models were originally developed and popularised by The Kellogg Foundation in the United States. By plotting the different stages in a programme – the actions and assumed consequences (outcomes) - logic models provide a simple but powerful way of interrogating the causality assumed by a programme. Logic models are read from left to right:



LANGUAGE

This is my definition of the terms used in a logic model:

- **Resources** are financial and non-financial inputs for a project.
- **Activities** are the actions taken by the project, the key choices in delivery.
- **Outputs** are measures of effort to show that the project took place, and can be defined from the supply side (number of events), or the demand side (number of participants).
- **Outcomes** are changes in the attitudes, behaviour, skills, knowledge, motivation, feelings, or aspirations of participants; or the culture, structures, systems, or processes of organisations.
- **Impacts** are the direct and indirect effects for society, the economy and the environment.

LOGIC MODEL

This is a logic model for the Creative Schools Partnership programme:

ACTIVITIES	OUTPUTS	SHORT TERM OUTCOMES	LONG TERM OUTCOMES	IMPACT
Creative projects Sharing events	Number of schools (target 10) Artworks: films, magazines, music video, installation and online cookbook	Students enjoy the project, increase their confidence, self-esteem and motivation, develop their communication, literacy and team working skills, strengthen their wellbeing, and increase their interest in learning and the arts Schools and funders learn how to use creativity in the classroom	Students have an increased tolerance of difference, an increased sense of belonging and higher aspiration Schools are better connected in the community, and embed creative approaches to learning in their School Development Plans and their practice	Contribution to: Increased community cohesion
ASSUMPTIONS: Schools have the capacity to apply learning gained from the projects.				

SCHOOL 1: MERCY COLLEGE

Post code	Belfast BT14 7QR
Total enrolments	450
% of students who receive free school meals	70%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	222
Religion	98% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	D'Ya get me. Using drama to explore issues affecting traumatised communities past and present, watching and creating drama
Artists and partners	Patricia Meir, retired Drama teacher Syd Trotter, Tutor Ulster University Dr Rosemary Moreland, Senior Lecturer in Youth and Community Studies, Ulster University
Timing	March to May 2018
Age of children	14
Number of children	20

CONTEXT

The school already has a highly positive attitude to the arts. The Principal, Martin Moreland, emphasised that: "I am very interested in the arts. Positive activities like this find the positive in the child and open them up to learning. The arts change our way of thinking." Martin adds that: "If you make an impact on a child you can have an impact on the parents." Martin talks about the arts as part of normalisation, of giving students normal childhood experiences that build happiness and resilience.

The school already has a strong approach to community relations. Students travel to Belfast Model to study courses that are not available in the school, such as Politics. In addition, there is a choir across the two schools. The Principal emphasises that this work is urgent because many children are growing up without positive role models and the paramilitaries are calling out again. It is in the children's hands to break the negative cycles from the past.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to:

- Develop students' oral communication skills, confidence and self-esteem.
- Encourage independent learning.
- Build transferable skills e.g. the development of multiple intelligences.
- Support the school's development priorities in terms of raising achievement in GCSE.
- Strengthen the school's links with arts organisations, parents and the wider community.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Students were selected individually to give a mix of those who were already interested in drama and those who would benefit the most because of isolation, behavioural or mental health issues.

ACTIVITY

The activity consisted of:

- 12 two hour drama workshops. Work included: team building exercises, group discussion of issues affecting them, exploration of issues through Forum Theatre, character development, students interviewing their families about the issues that affect and affected them, and further development of the drama piece using forum theatre techniques. Attendance at each workshop was 90-95%.
- Visits to the Lyric Theatre to see two shows: *We'll Work Hand in Hand* and *Lovers: Winners and Losers*; and the National Theatre to see *Ceasefire Babies*.
- A performance of the drama piece to families and friends in the MAC theatre. This included a film of the process, a presentation from the students about their hopes and dreams, and a process of releasing balloons symbolising and inscribed with their and their families' hopes and dreams. Some of the students were so excited about the performance that they asked to help create and laminate carefully designed tickets. Students each brought a friend from their year group and three to five family members.
- Two presentations from university drama students, who talked about drama techniques and careers.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was unusual in:

- Using Forum Theatre, which would generally be seen as challenging and so more suited to A level drama students.
- Having high teacher: student ratios. The session I observed had four facilitators with the 20 children.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTS

The teachers and artists suggested that the arts are special because:

- The arts have an attention to detail that can inspire professionalism more widely.
- The arts are a bridge between the academic and the social. They give a holistic view of the child.
- The arts embrace individuality and so allow the child to feel that they can be themselves.
- The arts create a feeling of safety that allows students to explore experiences that are stopping their learning.
- Taking children to theatres and other venues shows them another world that is beyond the places they usually go.

Drama is special because:

- Performing can bring out the quiet children.
- Drama is thinking expressively – including dance, song and visual arts.
- Getting in character gives transferable skills in analysing texts.

"One of the assumptions of Forum Theatre is that human beings think with their entire body and the entire body has to be involved in the search for alternatives to the unresolved conflicts the audience is experiencing." Angelo Miramonti, How to Use Forum Theatre for Community Dialogue 2017

Forum Theatre is special because:

- The intergenerational research gave a framework for children to talk to their parents about deep issues and to compare their lives with those of their parents.
- The structure is inclusive and participatory: rooted in the students' experiences and preferences.
- Students grew from being asked repeatedly 'what is your view? What do you want?'
- Talking in the second person allowed children to say things they wouldn't feel able to say personally.

"You get to talk as the character. You can say what you want without being judged because it is your character saying it. You can say things that you might not be brave enough to speak out. You can be open and talk about how suicide affects families You get to see different sides. You get to see the families and how they are affected. You get to see the person." Teacher

- The narrative gains power from connections to real experience.
- The structure of continually refining and questioning the pieces exposes values underpinning society and creates a multi-layered narrative. It also gave a fast pace to each session.

- The structure helps teachers feel more comfortable teaching creativity: it gives a framework for them to take risks safely.
- Playing different characters allowed students to try out different identities, to look at the risks and consider the consequences of actions, and so reflect on what would form a good choice.

"Through drama you can 'fake it until you make it'; you can put on this persona and see how it feels." Teacher

- Students who are quiet or shy have their time in the light and their peers start to see them differently and understand that they too want to have a voice.
- The open and non-judgemental nature of the process created a sense of group unity and trust.

"You can always rely on drama to bring a group together." Teacher

- Students have an understanding and a sense of ownership over the drama piece. The intention is for this feeling to extend to students' families, as their word and images, and local street names, appeared in the piece.
- The debrief process encourages students to consider different perspectives and to see behaviour as active rather than passive, as embodying choice.

"Asking students to put themselves in the role of being the oppressor, being the bully or the person shoplifting encourages them to reflect on their own behaviour." Artist

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for teachers and the school were:

- Building links with artists who have a different culture.

"It was wonderful to see that there was more that united us, in terms of our artistic beliefs, than divided us." Teacher

- Learning techniques to motivate students.

"The artist had a way of facilitating students rather than directing them. Teachers sometimes suffer from wanting to direct or over-direct. I realise if I get frustrated I tend to jump in with ideas. The artist has the ability to let ideas grow organically. I can very clearly see what it means for students to take ownership. I realised I want to do more of this." Teacher

- Seeing how children learn and how they naturally collaborate.

"The teachers have learnt about how children learn. When you take children out this system that drives them and blinds them and put them into this creative context you see them

naturally sharing and depending on each other. Some children wouldn't usually speak to others but did when they had a common ground. Teachers will now take that into how they teach." Teacher

- Being reminded of the value of theatre visits, which have been squeezed out of the curriculum.
- Seeing the impact on children.

"The children have a huge need to express themselves. Seeing them meet that need is hugely rewarding." Teacher

- Increasing interest in drama. At the beginning eight students wanted to study drama GCSE but by the end of the project that was 18, which will give an unusually large class.
- Understanding the value of longer sessions for the arts.

"One hour a week isn't enough. Having longer times is more effective. And you need the sessions to be during the day so the students aren't tired." Teacher

- Building confidence for even more ambitious projects in the future.

"At the next stage, we would like to get parents involved in the workshops, to strengthen the link between the theatre and the families." Teacher

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

I observed one workshop and noticed the high level of engagement and strong drama skills in terms of projection and body language. I also noticed that the process of freezing – stopped the drama and asking the group to reflect – explicitly develops emotional intelligence: dealing with peer pressure and cultivating empathy for different perspectives, taking time out (which is what the freezing is), seeing that there are choices, and being able to make positive choices. The teachers commented that greater confidence is evidenced from students' posture, for example, one student has stopped being hunched and hiding behind her hair.

All the students have studied for Bronze Arts Award.

I interviewed ten students, which created a strong view that validated the comments made by the artists and teachers. All interviewees enjoyed D'Ya Get Me. They enjoyed:

- **Being in a supportive group**. "I felt very homely. You are in a group that you can trust and won't make fun of you."
- **Having your ideas valued**. "It is fun how we get to voice different opinions and express how you feel." "I love the freedom of being able to say your own thing to adults who don't listen to you (parents). And they will have to listen now." "I enjoyed creating your

own ideas of what you want to do. Being independent. You feel responsible with what you are doing. Otherwise you are always told what way to go."

- **Playing different characters**. "When you are acting you are getting stuff out there. Without saying it. You can still portray you as a character."
- **Being in a non-judgemental environment**. "I liked that I could come up with anything and it would never be wrong. It was very free." "In class you are scared to put your hand up in case you are wrong but in drama you can't be wrong because it is your opinion."
- **Having a more informal relationship with teachers**. "The teachers feel different to in a classroom: more down to earth, on your level. Instead of always telling you what to do. They are talking to you more as a friend. You can connect with them more. It is easier to build a relationship with teachers when they are asking what you want to do."
- **Seeing theatre performances**. "Going to see different shows gave us ideas of what we could do in our drama."
- **Expressing themselves**. "I loved not having to be stuck at a table all day. Being able to show your personality in different ways. Not just writing."
- **Developing new friendships**. "I have loved getting to know people. You get close to them."
- **Playing**. "The warm ups were really fun."
- **Social commentary**. "I enjoyed getting to show the issues in society and how they can be solved."

The students described D'Ya Get Me as different from other classes because:

- **Students' ideas matter**. "It is so different. In a lesson you would write stuff down. Here you come up with your own suggestions and ideas. And everyone will take them into consideration." "You get options. Being asked 'do you want to do this or that?' It is your own opinion." "You are not sitting at a table writing. It is fun writing from your own perspective." "You are just doing something you want to do rather than something you are forced to do by a teacher."
- **Students feel more independent**. "You feel very mature in drama because you are thinking a lot. In class you don't feel very independent. You don't feel the age you actually are. In drama you feel independent and free."
- **Learning is more active and variable**. "It is nothing like anything you do in class. You don't sit at a desk and write all day." "It is so much fun to learn about drama. We are getting to watch plays and learn techniques."
- **Learning is energising**. "In an average class you are always told what to do. It is very draining."
- **Learning is more memorable**. "In drama I remember everything I do because it is more physical and you have space to breath. If we had History as a drama lesson I would know everything."

- **Students focus more**. "You can take it more seriously because you are in a class with people who all want to be there. In other classes some people aren't interested in what you are doing." "It is something different; you are active and learning and with a group a people who all want to do it. We want our play to be the best and we are grateful for the opportunity. In class some people want to do their best. Others don't understand it and don't want to do it and they will disrupt the class."
- **You welcome feedback**. "Everyone is looking at what can make your piece better, which is nerve-wracking but really fun because you know they are trying to help you. And you know you are going to get that adrenalin rush when you are on that stage."
- **You meet professionals**. "You can see people making a living from drama and that is really motivating."
- **You feel special**. "You know that is an achievement and you don't normally get to do it. There haven't been any musicals at school for a while. We are getting a drama experience first-hand at a young age."

Students said they have strengthened their confidence through:

- **Receiving positive feedback**. "When I went in, I would have been embarrassed to perform, but I have got feedback that I am really good and the feedback helps me get better."
- **Having a structure to express views**. "Before this I was a shy. The teachers and the way they structure the lesson here, they put me out there, and encouraged me without saying you have to do this. Go up and say what you feel and write a speech and be confident in yourself. Which I never was before. You realise you are your own person."
- **Having a structure to approach people**. "Being put into a group I would have said I didn't know how to approach people. They have taught me how to approach people. Everybody is your friend once you introduce yourself, so be yourself."
- **Feeling closer to people by sharing views**. "Before in class I wouldn't have got on with people. In the drama workshop you see people in a completely different light. They are more open. It is like two sections of the school. In drama you are comfortable. You connect with everyone. Drama develops more of your personal skills and helps social anxiety. It has really helped." "I am now much more open. I have seen that many other people share my opinions."
- **Quietening self-criticism**. "Before you would have a voice in your head saying 'don't say that'. The voice has got more positive. Saying 'it is ok. You can do it'."
- **Being more open to feedback**. "Now you can suggest ideas. You are not afraid of criticism, you know that it is contributive."
- **Being less scared of being judged**. "There are people you would be scared of talking to because you would be judged. But in drama it isn't you being judged, it is the character." "The drama project has taken me out of my comfort zone. I used to be really shy. But now I can talk to people. Your friends are there. You are not being yourself. You are

being a character. They can't judge. They are judging the character." "I get bad anxiety. But in drama I feel no one will judge so you can just be yourself."

- **Having a way to affect parents**. "You are hoping your audience will feel something. You want them to cry. It builds your confidence. That they are paying attention. We want someone to be affected by our play. So people can go home and talk to their families."

Students said they had improved their communication:

- **Learning communication skills**. "I feel more confident getting up and talking because I have learnt to project my voice. I have learnt about facial expression and body language. You learn that words are less important than body language."
- **Having other ways to communicate**. "Drama can show what a person has been through. People who might not want to talk can show it instead."
- **Being more open**. "It has changed my communication in a big way. Before I was confident. But I would never be fully opened up. I wouldn't have said my opinion. I would be scared of being judged. Now I feel that is my personal opinion. So I am also more open to other people's opinions."

The positive feeling from D'Ya Get Me has spilled over into general feelings about school through:

- **Looking forward to drama**. "On a drama day you are really excited. I enjoy coming to school because we have drama." "You are happier. You are more excited for the classes all the day. You have something to look forward to."
- **Feeling better after drama**. "In drama everything is let out. You are more active." "I feel more energetic in school. We do Maths after Drama and it is easier to learn because I am more relaxed."

Students said D'Ya Get Me affected their team-working skills through:

- **Learning together**. "There are group discussions about what you want. Acting isn't individual work. In class, learning is usually individual."
- **Having more time to talk together**. "In class, you are not allowed to talk to other people. In drama, the idea is to express your ideas. Then it all comes together into a giant ball of achievement."
- **Working with different people**. "In class, you work with your friends all the time. In drama you work with new people. You have a laugh with each other."
- **Encouraging empathy**. "I have learnt not to judge people. You don't know what is going on in someone's head."

The students thought it was reasonable to expect the project to have an effect on the community, in particular to:

- **Make families take young people more seriously**. "I really do think it will have an effect. Knowing my family will see this. It will change their perspective of young people. If we as young people have a voice about mental health it will open them up to seeing that young people aren't just going out drinking. That young people have problems."
- **Encourage families to listen to their children**. "It will make them more accepting. Parents and grandparents don't accept. I wouldn't be able to tell them I have anxiety. In drama I can show them. What really excites me is that some parents will go home and talk to their children differently." "We are showing how things used to be, how they are and what they could be and how you could change them. We are showing suicide and saying 'It is ok not to be ok.' We are saying people shouldn't bottle things up."

"In drama you have so much power to make an impact on someone's life. That is why I want to do drama at university."

- **Show how different people can co-exist**. "We show that even if people disagree they can still get on. There are things we have in common."

I asked students if schools should do more projects like D'Ya Get Me. Interviewees said they should because:

- **More students should benefit**. "I have a friend who would be so much more confident if she was involved in this. She has really good opinions. If she had this project she would be flying. Drama not being in primary schools is disgraceful. I want people to go into secondary schools being confident and drama gives that confidence."
- **More students would have a voice**. "It is disheartening that lots of people don't have drama in their lives. This means they don't have a voice. Drama should be obligatory. This school makes you feel very welcome so drama should be part of that." "Every school should do this because it has given us a voice instead of just learning about other people's stories."
- **More students would learn**. "Kids would find it more fun. And you still learn from it. I find it easier to learn because you are acting it out. You are not just being told from a book."
- **Students would understand each other bette**r. "It changes your life. You are thinking of different things. You are seeing things from other people's perspective."
- **Students would have a more positive role in society**. "This is real not just made up. There are a lot of issues that need to be solved and people need to hear our voices."

OUTCOMES FOR PARENTS

I wrote a questionnaire that the teachers administered after the performance. 28 people replied, in most cases answering every question Results are:

- 22 respondents were family members or family friends. The rest were teachers, pupils or one visitor.

- 66% of respondents had not been to the venue before.

All respondents rated the performance as enjoyable, thought provoking and memorable.

All respondents rated the performance as very high quality.

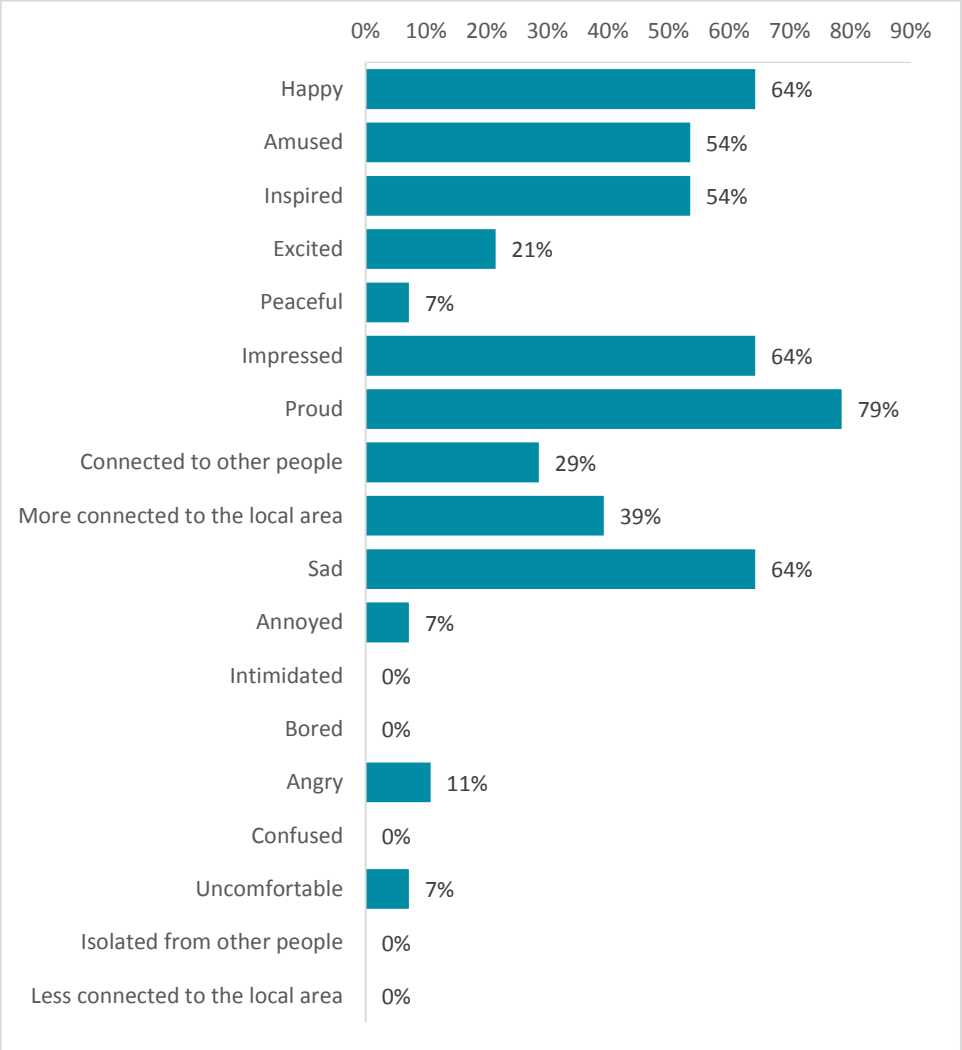
All respondents said it was definitely a good idea to use theatre to bring communities together.

All respondents said they would like the school to do more projects like this.

Respondents mentioned many visible changes in their friend/family member, especially increased confidence and enthusiasm.

A question about the feelings created by the show gave a picture of a complex and often individual reaction, which is evidence of the depth of the narrative.

FIGURE 1: HOW DID THE SHOW MAKE YOU FEEL? PLEASE TICK ALL THAT APPLY



SCHOOL 2: ST JOSEPH BOYS SCHOOL

Post code	Derry BT48 9NX
Total enrolments	720
% of students who receive free school meals	49%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	316
Religion	99% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Teenage Kicks – developing literacy through creating and producing own magazine
Artists and partners	Leona O Neill, writer and journalist Jim McCafferty, photographer
Timing	February to June 2018
Age of children	22
Number of children	12

CONTEXT

St Joseph's Boys School is a non-selective school, impacted by transfer testing, in an area of generational unemployment.

The Principal, Damien Harkin sees the arts as vitally important to the school: "When we do a performance it brings the community in and gets them to celebrate the work of the class. You can't do that with a Maths class. That is a special thing. That for me is very valuable."

"The arts brings life and vitality to the school. Schools can't live without it. Society can't do without the arts."

The Creative Schools Partnership project was more impactful than the school could have anticipated: it improved the participants' literacy and academic performance; it increased their confidence and gave them the assurance that they could stand up and speak in front of a group; it also raised the profile of the school in the community.

"The boys were everywhere in the community. The project was fantastic for community relations. The participants now have a different standing in the school. Other years are looking up to them."

The Principal sees the project as a model for future work.

"This was a very positive project and one we will build on year by year."

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to improve students' literacy skills and strengthen their connections with the local community. The project was also seen as a development opportunity for teachers.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Students were selected because they had good attendance but would benefit from additional support with reading and spelling.

ACTIVITY

Activity consisted of:

- Leona O Neill, writer and journalist, and Jim McCafferty, photographer, ran master classes for students. Sessions were two to three hours long, not on one fixed day of the week, but fitted around students' other classes.
- The students went into the community and interviewed residents and local businesses. They also interviewed other students in the school, for example students in ICT who had created models of the school buildings on Minecraft.
- The students visited the Derry resource centre.
- Photographs taken by the children were curated into an exhibition, which was launched by the Mayor. One of the businesses interviewed for the magazine supplied the catering. The launch was covered in the local newspaper: https://www.derryjournal.com/lifestyle/derry-lads-at-st-joseph-s-launch-new-school-magazine-1-8550369
- The students edited a magazine. Articles included: students' perspective on transfer testing, fly fishing, a teacher talking about their experience of cancer, what Brexit means for Derry, a tour of Derry's bakeries, the increase in Derry barbers, Minecraft at St Joseph's, tips for taking photographs, and a guide to Derry slang.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The school had not previously worked with photographers or journalists. Nor had students previously interviewed members of the community.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Journalism is special because:

- It is writing with a purpose for a broad audience. “Journalism is telling a story that ordinary people can understand. It can make them laugh or cry, or want to be involved in a campaign. It can move them from their seat.” Artist/journalist
- It is a direct career route. Leona wrote the specification for the Journalism GCSE.

Photography is special because:

- It has power over the story. “A bad photograph can kill a story.” Artist/photographer
- It requires mastery of the general and the specific. “When you are taking the picture you need to be looking at what is going on in the background.” Artist/photographer
- It can summarise an entire process or experience. “Anybody can take a picture but not everyone can capture a moment.” Artist/photographer

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school were:

- The teachers were reminded about the strength of the school’s links to the community. A high percentage of the local businesses interviewed were past pupils. “It gave an idea that we are not a wee speck in Derry.”
- The teachers were impressed with the students’ quality of thought. “I would have looked at children who are 11 and 12 and assumed their opinions weren’t mature enough to write about these subjects. We were talking about entrepreneurship, mental health, Brexit. I was blown away by the opinions they had. These guys were totally clued into wide aspects.”
- In the middle of the project the school got an inspection focused on literacy. The teachers are all on industrial action and couldn't be observed so they suggested the inspectors interview the children. The resulting report was very positive.
- The magazine will be printed and distributed to all the first years’ and to local businesses.
- The photographs will be used for other projects.
- The school is considering organising an after-school class for photography.
- The teachers are considering replicating the project with future years. “The project is a blueprint for other projects.” The children have mentioned other possibilities that didn't happen at this stage e.g. interviewing actors from The Derry Girls show or having one of their photographs used on a billboard in town.

- The resource centre has asked for the boys to come back to coach primary school students in how to take photographs for a leaflet they are planning showing problems of litter and the state of some of the local streets and asking the adults to be more responsible.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The project had these outcomes for the students:

- The students were very engaged. Three are considering being photographers and are investigating night classes to develop their skills.
- The students gained valuable expertise for GCSE. The curriculum includes a unit analysing newspaper articles.
- The students improved their literacy skills. They had strong motivation to improve their grammar and composition. "I have seen a huge difference in their writing. Their first writing was like English essays but they adapted quickly and some of their stories are better than articles in the Irish News. They really grew in the maturity of their writing." Journalist/artist
- The children behaved responsibly. They were handling expensive cameras that could be damaged easily.
- The students worked to a high level. The journalist was teaching them some of the same material she uses in her course for undergraduates: "I watched them grow as young journalists. The more I pushed them the more confident they got."
- The teachers raised their expectations of the children. "I got my eyes opened to how kids have moved on." "They wanted to know everything. How to change the lenses, memory cards, how many you would use, backing up. This is not a grammar school, and they are up there with the best."
- The children developed their communication skills. The journalist taught them to "be professional, put your game face on. If you are giddy, you have to be prepared. If you are interviewing people you have to look confident." Journalist/artist
- The children are very proud of the magazine. "They were enthusiastic. Everyone will see themselves in the magazine, having achieved something very profitable. For some students the impact has been transformative."

I interviewed five of the children. All enjoyed the project because:

- **They learned about the world of work**. "It helped us understand and know what photographers and reporters have to do for their job. To put yourself in the shoes of a journalist." "You get to experience other jobs. You see there are so many jobs out there. You get to see the outside world."

- **They enjoyed meeting the artists**. “They are funny and amazing. She has given up tips. The order to ask questions. That will help you in the future. No one knows what they will be yet, but this has given a lot of opportunity to find your own path.”
- **They improved their communication skills**. “Doing interviews gives you the skills to talk to anyone.” “Some people enjoyed your job. Others didn't. But you had to listen and not be negative about them.”
- **They widened their social networks**. “It gave us a chance to know each other better. And improve our social skills. Building up your confidence, doing interviews to be able to talk to anyone.” “When we were out we all had a laugh. Somebody you never talk to in class you find yourself really close to.”
- **They strengthened their relationships**. “In class everyone is heads down working. For the magazine, everyone is around the table talking about each. It brings you close to the other people.” “It has brought the whole class closer together. We all worked hard and worked even harder together. It feels as if we are brothers because we did so much stuff together. You know what they are like. You can finish each other’s sentences. People you never thought of approaching together. You can tell them if you are stressed about something.”
- **They felt special**. “We are the only school in the programme doing a magazine.”

It built students’ confidence because:

- **It was easier than they expected**. “You didn’t feel as if you were interviewing, you felt you were having a chat with friends.”
- **They learnt literary devices usually taught to for older children**. “We learned AMFOORST (alliteration, metaphor, fact, onomatopoeia, rhetorical, simile, triples).”
- **Experience showed what they could do**. “We did a vox pop on Brexit. We got people’s views, strangers. Stopped them in the park. We knew we could do it.”
- **They had to ask interviewees to pose in a certain way for the photograph**. “I wanted to take a photograph and found myself talking to the subject for 15 minutes. Getting them to move into the right position so I could get the shot I wanted.”
- **They were able to be themselves**.
- **Learning was fun**. “You get to learn a bunch about barber shops, buns, restaurants, what they do. We laughed a lot. One boy got his hair cut after the interview!” “It isn’t too formal. You have fun along the way.”

It improve their writing skills because:

- **The stories developed out of personal interests**. “You can express yourself in writing. It is about what you want to write. In class it is more about getting the techniques right. In class is about what the school wants you to write.”

- **They used techniques they had learnt**. “Sometimes when I am doing my homework I realise I am using those techniques; they are GCSE techniques but it is better to learn them early.”
- **They had time to absorb learning**. “If we do projects we will have more chance to practice.”
- **They learnt to summarise stories**. “We are doing captions. Name age and how long in the job. We were trying to create captions that are classy.”

The children were very grateful to the teachers for organising the project: “The thing we most need to know is what the teachers have done for us. Without them we would still be stuck in the classroom. That outcome has turned our life around. They organising the trips and helped us in the written stuff. They have been there to support us”

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

The photographer found the work energising: “Their enthusiasm was infectious. Reminding you of things you haven’t talked about for years. That you take for granted.”

SCHOOL 3: ST. VINCENT'S CENTRE

Post code	BT6 8HN
Total enrolments	658: overall college
% of students who receive free school meals	100%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	185: overall college
Religion	78% Catholic, 3% Protestant: overall college
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Artist's residency
Artists and partners	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist Orla McKeagney, dramatist
Timing	March to July 2018
Age of children	11-14
Number of children	10-18

CONTEXT

The school takes children who have been excluded from mainstream provision because of social, emotional or behavioural issues. Children tend to come from challenging backgrounds either as looked after children or in families with issues around violence and crime. Aggressive behaviour often hides low self-esteem and a history of not having people to trust. Children are taught in class sizes of five pupils (with two teachers) and learning is closely tailored to individual needs. Classes generally last half an hour.

"It would be wonderful to see the long term effect of this type of project in our school. If the pupils could engage in this type of creative activity throughout the school year I feel the value would be felt across all subjects." The Principal, Brona Donegan

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were:

- To foster self-esteem and self-worth through creative approaches.
- To develop students' skills, including their ability to work collaboratively.
- To increase students' attention on Fridays.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Selection was an organic process. All KS3 students had the chance to experience the workshops, and all except one chose to take part. 18 students participated at some stage. The average participation in a session was nine. A core group of eight participated five or more times.

ACTIVITY

The activity consisted of:

- Ten times two and a half hour sessions with the artist Annmarie Robinson from 10am on a Friday.
- A visit to the artist's studio. This included hour-long journeys there and back, and a visit to a café.
- A visit to the Ulster Museum to see the ceramic collection.
- Creation of a 300 tile mosaic combining tiles created by the artist and the students that will be displayed in the foyer. The tiles from the artist include repeat patterns that will pull the work together and so ensure a high quality aesthetic.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

St Vincent's Centre has very little provision for the arts. The workshops took place in the technology studio, which the art teacher shares. The school had never before worked with an artist; never worked with clay; and never had projects where the teachers worked alongside the students, as happened here. The Principal was generally supportive of arts teaching, but was still surprised by the scale of impact of the project. Her background is PE.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Clay is special because:

- It is a form of touch without touch, which might be important for traumatised children who dislike being touched.
- It is possible that this stroking effect soothes nerve endings. Certainly, I observed children were fidgeting during the interviews and it is possible that clay-making redirects this energy.
- Clay is a very flexible medium, malleable in three dimensions. It supports free creativity.
- Clay changes in the hands, becoming warm and soft. It is very forgiving and allows the participant to make and remake.
- It is messy, which is an attraction for students who are often reined in.
- Clay has a cultural and symbolic value: it is mentioned in the bible and makes a link to the earth. It is also a way of escaping from a world defined by technology.
- Clay is a common/non precious material, which reinforces a sense of creativity as being easily accessible.

- Clay-making requires intense concentration, which gives people a distraction from worries or cares.
- Some techniques of clay-making are rhythmic, which again might have a relaxing effect.
- Clay-making requires physical proximity. The artist guides the student by placing her hands over theirs.
- Clay-making strengthens visualisation skills because glazing changes colour during the firing process, so the user has to apply one colour in order to create another.

"Deliberately working with clay stimulates the rich interaction of limbic, cortical and bodily sensorial pathways, permitting access to implicit emotional memories." Art Therapy and the Neuroscience of Relationships, Creativity and Resilience, Norton Series on Interpersonal Neurobiology, Noah Hass-Cohen and Joanne Clyde Findlay, 2015

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The students' engagement with the project exceeded all the school's expectations. The studio visit was a high point in the project because eight students squeezed into the artists' studio and stayed quiet, respectful and engaged for two hours. They asked before touching artworks. They played happily on a swing in her garden. One boy who has autism was whooping for joy while working on the potter's wheel.

A couple of the students decided that the artist wasn't advertising her studio well enough and decided to create some fliers for her in the English class. The cross -curricular link is probably less important than the demonstration of consideration for the artist. Another cross-curricular link was in Maths since Annmarie suggested students measure the middle of each tile so that their design didn't run out of space.

"The studio visit was one of the best days of my six years as a principal. In half an hour lessons, it is usual to have ten minutes or so of attention. For the students to work calmly for two hours is completely unprecedented." Principal

The question is: how did this exceptional result happen? In discussion with the Principal and the artist, these potential explanations were suggested:

- The length of the project gave students the time to build up a relationship with Annmarie. This is important because they do not trust easily.
- The artist has long experience of working with men in prisons. Her body language communicated warmth rather than fear of the boys. On one occasion she put her rings down on the table – showing trust - and one of the boys asked if he could guard them.
- The artist modelled calm and focus and respect for the material and each other. On one occasion, a boy threw a piece of clay and she said: " I love you to bits but I don't tolerate people throwing clay". It didn't happen again.

- The artist explained the different pottery techniques (pinched form, coiled form, slab form and thrown pots; under glazing and glazing) in a simple matter of fact way.
- The process was designed to build ownership from the students. For example, they were given two different designs for the mosaic, and voted on which one they preferred.
- The space is located to one side. Another project, around boxing, didn't succeed in the same way, and it is possible that the students felt more exposed in the central hall.
- Many of the students are kinaesthetic learners and the artform suited their learning style well.
- The artists' studio contained flowers and views of the surrounding countryside. It is possible that the feeling of natural beauty calmed the students.
- Annmarie had an inherent understanding that the boy's abilities, how they presented, would vary from day to day.
- The three students I interviewed said that they felt good making things. One also said he appreciated the way Annmarie put her feelings into her art and said he had been trying to put his feelings into his pottery. Another said that he liked the feeling of being in the group, of working alongside other students and feeling a connection without having to talk.
- The students expressed gratitude for the studio visit. One said he felt lucky to be there.

The legacy from the project is:

- The Principal feels more interested in exploring arts approaches since this project showed that some of the boys are very creative.
- The Principal feels more confident to take the students on visits out of the school.
- The school has decided it would like to continue offering the students pottery. They found they have an old kiln and need to raise money for a potter's wheel and ventilation.
- The students created pottery pieces to take home. For example, one created a cross for his grandfather's grave.
- One of the students said he thought about the clay sessions when he wanted to calm himself down.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The core group all increased their behavioural scores during the time they participated in the project. In one case the improvement was remarkable.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNER

Annmarie said she developed her ability to work slowly, closely attuned to the participants. She also benefited from the relationship with the school: “The boys gave joy and company back. It has made me happy and humble.”

SCHOOL 4: ST. CECILIA'S COLLEGE

Post code	Derry BT48 9PJ
Total enrolments	797
% of students who receive free school meals	63%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	154
Religion	99% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creative workshops and films about mental health
Artists and partners	Bounce Culture NI
Timing	March to June 2018
Age of children	11
Number of children	24

CONTEXT

St Cecilia's College has always had art at its heart, consistent with its name, St Cecilia being the Patron Saint of music. When it was a specialist school its majored in the performing arts. It aims to expose children to as many artforms as possible to increase choice and link to career pathways. It is one of only two schools in Northern Ireland that offer Dance GCSE and A level, and the school has recently employed a specialist performing arts teacher. It also offers fashion and textiles qualifications. Students on the Princes Trust programme designed a graffiti wall on the New Road. Perhaps not coincidentally the school also has an exceptional track record in exams, with the best results in Derry.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to:

- Improve students' confidence to talk about mental health.
- Improve attendance in school.
- Increase students' positive feelings about working together.
- Increase the sense of connection with the wider school community

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The students were the group already involved in the Princes Trust programme.

ACTIVITY

The idea for the project came from one of the students, who chose mental health as a subject for her group presentation, and asked for this subject to be discussed in school.

The activities that the students wanted to try evolved over time. The team of teachers and Bounce Culture facilitators let the children dictate the direction of the sessions. This was consistent with the principle of placing children at the heart of the project but did result in some last minute organisation, such as finding a yoga teacher at a few days' notice!

"You could never predict what the students would enjoy. So some of the activities and scheduling changed. When they tried one thing liked, they wanted to try others, so the project ballooned." Artist/partner

- The project consisted of two times 55 minute sessions a week, on Thursday and Friday mornings. In all this was 24 sessions.
- Three Bounce Culture facilitators were involved. They supported the participants in videoing activities with the aim of producing a short film at the end to document the process.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project addressed mental health directly. Although students trialled different creative and sporting activities and lifestyle changes, the heart of the project was an evaluation sheet in which participants rated each in terms of its ability to affect their mood/mental health. The specific questions were: Before: What impact will this activity have on your mental health? What do you expect from this activity? Have you tried this before? What happened? After: How did you find this activity? Did it have the impact you expected? Would you recommend this activity? Why or why not? What score would you give it?

The length of the project allowed the children to own the process.

"We don't force them to do things they don't want to do. We wait until they are ready to do something. We revisit things. It is safe. The environment enables them to make mistakes in the creative process. They are not even mistakes.' Bounce Culture

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Film is special because:

- It evidences achievement in a vivid, multi-sensory way.
- It builds on young people's existing strong visual skills.

"The Bounce Culture facilitator said that a student had a natural eye for framing and I have never seen her (the student) so light and happy." Teacher

- It builds critical skills that are transferable to other lessons.

- It has many different roles, whether in writing, filming, or lighting.

"We made it clear there is a role for everyone in film." Bounce Culture

- Children feel the weight of responsibility because they are trusted with equipment worth thousands of pounds.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school are:

- The teacher is interested in ways of using creative learning in class.

"This project has shifted my perspective from project work towards thinking about the diversity of the ways arts are delivered. We definitely need more creative ways of delivering learning in the classroom." Teacher

- The teacher has responsibility for the KS3 curriculum review in the school. She is considering ways to use film to document achievement.

"It can be hard to capture teaching outcomes. There is a lot of focus on the summative testing. Film allows us to measure engagement. It captures a process and the outcome. It provides ownership. To see how impressed they were with themselves when they saw the film. And film reminds them of what they have learnt. When they will leave school they won't remember some of the dry content in lessons, but they will remember the film. I would completely reconsider how I capture students' skills development. We are so paperwork driven. This project has completely changed how I would allow students to articulate their progress. They could be talking to an IPad or writing a blog." Teacher

- The teacher saw the value of taking time for projects.

"The school is having a conversation asking whether the Princes Trust work could be done in less time. Now I would say no, it can't. You see the quality of the work when you have time to build relationships, time to make mistakes. As a teacher there is a tendency to step in and say 'that wouldn't work girls, take it from me'. After this project, I would be much more confident to let it run and let students figure it out themselves." Teacher

- The teacher Is going to bring Bounce Culture in to talk to the children about careers in the arts.

"Our careers advice needs to change to take account of modern ways of making a living like vlogging." Teacher

- The teacher is considering ways to continue the project.

- Three of the students have a track record on non-attendance and disruption. One of the indicators of the success of the project is that it had no behavioural incidents and students who were usually late into school turned up on time for the project sessions.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The teacher and the three facilitators from Bounce Culture have seen signs of students increasing in confidence. This is evidenced by: more open posture, more smiles, students who being more relaxed with talking, quiet children volunteering to be filmed or to present on the film, a child who used to sit apart from the others who now joins in, students socialising beyond their friendship groups and students taking more initiative. The impact on the students exceeded the teacher's expectations. She would have been pleased to have seen a change in half the students, but impact is noticeable in more than 90% and the project hadn't finished at the time of our interview.

"The students' language has changes from "Miss can do this' to "Miss we are going to do this. Is it OK?' It is a power shift." Teacher

I interviewed five students in a group. They said the project was different from other classes because:

- **It is more sociable**. "We talk more. We are less shy. We can be open."
- **It is more relaxed**. "It is less stressful. If anyone has anything to say we will listen. You can be yourself in this class."
- **It is more interesting**. "We get out of the classroom. We are always doing things. It is always something new. We get to go outside. None of us are about sitting down. You get bored. We all want to be on our feet doing things."
- **Students feel more comfortable**. "We are talking to people. I never would have been comfortable talking to people. I have opened up. I am more comfortable talking to cameras." "Before you would cover your face. Now we are all volunteering to be in front of the camera." "We are more comfortable. You normally have a bubble around you and here you let the bubble down. At the start I would never had sat here and talked to you and now I am more confident talking to people. Interacting to people who are older. When I moved into the class I knew no one and now I realise it is better to move outside your bubble and get to know new people."
- **They are more open**. "We are more free to say what we think. We have a voice here. Everyone listens to everyone. If you have an idea. In other classes you are afraid of getting it wrong but here even if you get something wrong you just learn from your mistakes." "It has brought us all closer. And I am more open. In class you don't really talk to the group, and you choose who to work with so it is a small group of people."
- **They are more self-aware**. "Before we wouldn't have said mental health was important. I wouldn't have known what it is. This project makes you more aware of how you are feeling."

The project has led to them making changes in their lives for the sake of their mental health:

- **They take part in PE**. "I thought PE was a waste of time and now I realise it can be a break. I had all the excuses under the sun not to do it. Now you look forward to it. You can see it is good for you."
- **They are more organised**. "You are more focused. You are not so bored in class because you have a better mindset. I got more organised. I got an A4 folder and got organised. Before I would have gone searching for stuff and it would have made me stressed."
- **They have cut out energy drinks**. "We didn't know it was the sugar. I am getting more sleep because of cutting down on sugar. "
- **They are getting more sleep**. "I never used to go to bed before 3am and now I got to bed at 11am." "I stopped sleeping after school because I realised it was stopping me sleeping later."
- **They have been talking to their family and friends more**. "I have been going out for walks with my friends." "I have been talking to my family more, getting on with my family better now. Before I would go to my room and watch tv. Now I go for walks with my sister."

Interviewees thought schools should do more projects like this because:

- **It would help attendance**. "People would want to go to school more because it is more fun. "
- **It shows the value of learning**. "It gives you a new perspective on skill."
- **It would be able to support pupils better**. "It can make a change to pupils. The teachers don't know every person and what they are going through."
- **It would encourage self-care**. "It would teach pupils to help themselves."

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Bounce Culture gained from having a project of this length. It had never worked on a project around mental health before.

SCHOOL 5: ASHFIELD BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

Post code	Belfast BT4 2LY
Total enrolments	740
% of students who receive free school meals	44%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	269
Religion	77% Protestant, 2% Catholic, 21% Other
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Write Down Our Street, a story writing journey, story-telling supported by trained volunteer mentors
Artists and partners	Fighting Words Belfast Visit to CS Lewis Trail and The Wee tram
Timing	April to June 2018
Age of children	11-14
Number of children	16

CONTEXT

The Principal, Jo McColgan, sees huge value in the arts. He is concerned that the huge shift towards STEM subjects, while positive in some regards, is leaving some students behind: "We are in danger of forgetting that not every child can be scientific." The school and the surrounding area has a long history of connection to the arts with links to artists as varied as CS Lewis, Van Morrison, Jonathan Swift, and Gary Moore from Thin Lizzie.

"The arts are hugely important and hugely significant. All over the world, when people live in a time of war, they tend to become quite creative. They tend to express themselves through the arts. As a people we are naturally creative. The more we can tap into that. It has a vital role in healing people. Without the arts there is no colour. I don't want everything to be monotone."

The Principal was extremely happy with the Creative Schools Partnership: "The kids are buzzing, absolutely motivated and keen to do more, which is the greatest gift we can give them." Their achievements are even more impressive when you know the difficult backgrounds the students have.

The Principal is already planning an organisational legacy for the project. He is intending to establish a nurture unit in October 2018, which will be based around project-based and creative learning. If this succeeds, he will organise training for all the teachers so that the learning can be harnessed across the school.

OBJECTIVES

The objective, taken from the School Development Plan, were for students to be inspired, informed and confident young men who make good choices, develop resilience and ultimately succeed in achieving their goals and aspiration; meeting individual learning needs and facilitating the full integration of students regardless of their socio-economic

background or abilities. And also for them to develop their confidence further in writing, speaking and listening.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The Learning Support Department selected students who were already participating in their literacy development programme. 85% of boys on this programme are on the special needs register, with some also experiencing social isolation.

ACTIVITY

The project consisted of:

- A presentation about the project.
- A learning contract and session about hopes and fears.
- A visit to the CS Lewis trail, which gives information on the places where the writer lived and his sources of inspiration. The students created rubbings of the words around the square. The group also watched part of the 1998 production of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
- Four sessions with Fighting Words. The students sat in a circle and created stories together. The general structure of each session was: the Fighting Words facilitator led the students to create a main character or setting. Three possibilities were created and the participants voted for their favourite. The group discussed questions around the main character, such as their greatest wish and greatest fear. The group developed other aspects of the story such as the main character's best friend and setting through again coming up with three options and voting on them. Then each participant created their own story around the shared characters, working in pairs with a writing mentor trained by Fighting Words. Participants read out their story, or asked others to read out their story, at the end of the session. When the participants had left, the facilitators and mentors had a debriefing session to discuss what they had learnt.
- Three teachers attended a CPD session with Fighting Words.
- The group visited the Folk and Transport museum, the Titanic Shipyard, and the Wee Tram.

The students engaged so well with the project that the teacher decided to expand the project to include:

- Each child's favourite story will be framed and displayed.
- Each child will be given a certificate that will include their photograph and a personal affirmation on the back, signed by the Principal.

- Participants' stories will be put together to create a booklet.
- At the Folk and Transport Museum, another school, Holy Family Cookstown (which is Catholic), is bringing a group 12 year 9 students to listen to participants read their stories, play games and have a tour of the building together.
- The school will organise a Write Down Our Street Chaos Morning, where participants will be able to develop aspects of their stories including making models of the characters using fabric paint, canvas.
- The teacher created three copies of a newsletter describing the project to parents.
- The teacher is considering organising further activities for participants using the artforms they have been shown to enjoy to engage them in class.
- The school is planning another project with Fighting Words in September. Four schools will work together online, creating stories around Frankenstein.

The attendance was 80-85%. Non-attendance was mainly to do with exams, not lack of interest.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was different because:

- The school has had one-off workshops but no multiple workshops with the same group.
- The environment at Fighting Words was informal. Students sat on bean-bags in a circle that included the facilitators. The school does not have enough space to create an informal learning area.
- CS Lewis lived in North Belfast. Many of his inspirations were local.
- The school does not tend to organise creative opportunities or visits. Any school visits tend to be for STEM subjects.

The teacher chose the artform because it was active, without a lot of waiting around. The project was also quite simple to explain to the participants.

One of the good things about the Creative Schools Partnership Programme is that it covered payment for teaching cover. The project would have been a massive problem otherwise. This element meant that teachers could come and observe project activities and learn from the arts facilitators.

The teacher noted that: "This project was able do things that are otherwise tricky. How do you find this child a friend? The project gave a natural way to give young people the help they needed. Without this indirect approach young people often run away from help."

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Fighting Word's model is special because:

- Fighting Words has a step-by-step process to help participants with their writing.
- Fighting Words encourages confidence by calling the participants Young Writers.
- Fighting Words has a typist behind a screen who writes each sentence created by the children. This enables the process to be inclusive but also fast moving.
- Fighting Words has an illustrator who creates an image of the story as it evolves and reveals the result near the end of the session. This process gives important validation to the children's work and further stimulates their imaginations. The images are shown on Fighting Words' website.
- Fighting Words provides clear follow on activity for participants by inviting them to join its Write Clubs.
- The model was developed in America 16 years ago[5]. It has been tested and refined many times and so gives schools the benefit of considerable expertise.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school are:

- The teachers feel more confident to run projects that are flexible.
- The teachers have experience of developing materials such as trails that they would use again.
- Some of the materials will go up on the School's Facebook page.
- Some of the students' stories are featured on Fighting Words' website: www.youngatart.co.uk/fighting-words-belfast/stories
- The teacher made connection with Linda Ervine, who is promoting the Irish language in Protestant communities and has suggested running workshops in the school.
- The school saw the benefit of using the arts to strengthen community relations.

"Designing a project around a discipline or artform brings people together by giving them a shared experience. Young people can develop their views beyond the sound bites they might have heard. So they strengthen their ability to express themselves while having fun at the same time."

[5] The model was developed by 826 Valencia in San Francisco which was founded by the writer Dave Eggers. http://826valencia.org.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

I interviewed 10 students. They all enjoyed the project because:

- **The step-by-step process made writing easy**. "You get to use your imagination and make up characters. Then you get to write stories about the characters you made up."
- **Writing was fun because it was creatlve**. "Creative writing is fun because you get to make up characters and experiment with different ideas."
- **Writing was fun because it was vivid**. "What made it enjoyable was the detail in the story, the animals we created."
- **Working as a group made writing easier**. "It was better in a group because we all had different ideas." "Writing the stories with other people made me feel happier and able to write more. I can get more ideas and create more ideas and make stories out of them."
- **Being able to write gave them a sense of achievement**. "Fighting Words made it easier to write down your ideas, so you are not struggling. They opened up the ideas. So you don't have just one idea. You write a whole story in 30 minutes." "I was really happy. I wrote words I have never written before." "It is a lot easier to write stuff because I have learnt creative writing."

The project was different to a usual class because:

- **Students worked together**. "It is more enjoyable because it is more creative and you can discuss things with people." "You all help each other. In class the teacher picks someone and then you sit in silence." "Everyone is writing a story together. In class you have to write a story yourself. You don't get any ideas. Here we are working together so you have more ideas." "It has helped me get down my ideas, before I couldn't get it down on the page because if I didn't know how to spell so I would get frustrated. Now I could just ask the person next to me. If they didn't know something I would help them."
- **Students felt ownership of the process**. "Your ideas were valued. Your ideas are not used so much in class."
- **The process was more organic**. "You get to add to the story, personalise it."
- **You could concentrate more**. "Normally you are sitting still. It is easier to focus if you are moving around. Otherwise you are looking around all the time." "I was using my brain more. Normally you sit in silence and focus on the one thing."
- **It was more relaxed**. "It is not as stressing as a class. You can work at your own pace and mix your ideas with other peoples. This makes it a lot easier to create a piece of writing that is unique and everyone is doing the same thing. It is easier sharing and spreading your story across the whole group rather than writing a whole story yourself." "It is more comfortable and makes you feel you can share the ideas you have. The way it is presented. The teachers are not in front of you. The teacher sits with you. Everyone contributes to the group."

- **There was more support**. "In class, if you don't have enough done the teacher will shout at you or give you a detention. With Fighting Words, the assistants ask if you need any help. They don't mind how much you have got done. They make it more interesting and fun. The whole set up involves more people. It is more of a group activity. It helps with team-working skills."

Students said that that the project increased their confidence in writing because of:

- **The clear process**. "I am better at English now. It gave you a process so you knew what you were doing." "It has made me more creative. When I am in class I don't even know how to write, but when you are there you can write anything down and make a good story out of it. It has encouraged me to write out of school." "I have learnt to make details of characters and fit them into a background. From one character creating other characters that are related."
- **The focus of creativity**. "I have learnt that stories can come from anywhere and writing is more than just writing. It is the creative part too."
- **Gaining experience of writing**. "I have been using paragraphs, more developing the words and characters more."
- **Positive feedback**. "The facilitators really make you feel you can contribute. Even if you don't think your ideas are that good they can be developed with a bit of help."
- **Feeling understood**. "It feels different. I feel understood more. I think I am creative, which is important because it makes writing easier."
- **The small group**. "There are fewer people. It is easier to talk up in a smaller group."
- **Feeling motivated**. "Now I have taken an interest. It has helped a lot. My reading has got better, my writing. I have writing things four or five pages long."

The positive feeling from the project has spilled over into their feelings about:

- **Learning**. "It has made me more confident. You don't like reading in front of people, but when you are there you feel more confident about things. I am more confident now because I believe I can do well."
- **School**. "I really did enjoy it. Now I think of school as a really fun place." "I think of school a bit better. I feel happier because the project has given me more friends."
- **Class**. "I speak out more. The teachers have commented. I can express myself more."
- **Collaboration**. "Even though people might have different ideas and not what you might like they are still good if you listen to them." "I have learnt to use other people's ideas. You are surprised that other people have similar ideas to you, or ideas you can use in your story. It helps to have other people there." "I have learnt to accept other ideas from other people. I have learnt to listen. Before if I had an idea, that is what I wanted it to be. I learnt that other people have great ideas. If you don't give them the chance you will never know your story or your activity could be much better."

All interviewees thought that schools should do more projects like this because of:

- **The social skills gained**. “It helps people who are nervous and shy, helps you make friends. If you don’t go out. It can give you a way of talking to other people.” “Definitely it is a really good experience. You make more friends. Instead of people you met on the first day. It allows you to speak to other people without being nervous, and meet new people. Develop your friendships further. You know them better from creating together.”
- **The approach to learning**. “It is fun and teaches you a lot more.”

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Fighting Words had tended to work more with primary schools and this project enhanced its knowledge about how to cater for the needs of individual children in secondary schools. Fighting Words tends not to get the opportunity to run multiple workshops with the same group of children in a short period of time. The project confirmed the organisation’s view that sustained engagement results in an exponential growth in participants’ confidence. Mentors also reported exceptional satisfaction from seeing such great changes in students.

“We focus on ideas and originality. We don't teach that there needs to be plan. We start with an idea. We don't start with a plan.” Fighting Words

SCHOOL 6: ASHFIELD GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL

Post code	Belfast BT4 2LY
Total enrolments	691
% of students who receive free school meals	45%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	267
Religion	67% Protestant, 5% Catholic, 27% Other
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Self Esteem Succeeds creation of music video
Artists and partners	Accidental Theatre Company
Timing	May to July 2018
Age of children	13
Number of children	18

CONTEXT

The Principal, Alison Mungavin, is very positive about the arts, although possibilities are limited by school budgets. The school already has a long history of using the arts for community development. Out of school hours the building is used by the charity Artemis for arts and sporting activities. As Alison explains: “The arts makes it much easier to bring parents into school because the context is positive. Parents love seeing their children perform and are very appreciative towards the school for it. In addition, parents who are reticent to go to the theatre will come into the school. So school performances help them understand what a theatre would be like so they will go to venues.”

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were for a group of students to create a music video that would develop students’ creative skills in music, writing, design and filmmaking as well as improving their team working, self-expression and self-confidence.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

The school chose a year 10 class with mixed ability pupils.

ACTIVITY

The original plan was for students to work with the artists over a period of two months. School constraints meant that the project was delayed so delivery was concentrated into six days of dedicated time:

- Groundwork. Day one. Created the principle of students being in charge of the content; created a shared design language; taught skills in music, lyrics and video.

- Ideation. Day two and part of days one, three and four. Explored themes and created a possible ideas for the next stage
- Development. Day three. Explained the process for realising ideas; considered roles in the production process.
- Production. Days four and five. Rehearsed the planned idea; filmed core material; recorded song vocals and music; edited the video.
- Evaluation. Day six. Discussed the process and what participants could take forward on their own without the artists.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

This was the first time the school had run a project with professional artists; the first time it had involved students in such an intensive project; the first time students took part in a project than ranged across the school; and the first time in a few years that the English and Drama departments had worked together formally.

Compressing the project into a week and a day meant that wider links – to parents, across the curriculum, to arts venues – were not practical. In addition, some students found the long hours tiring and struggled to stay focused.

Richard Lavery from Accidental Theatre pointed out that concentrated delivery had strengths and weaknesses. Immersion and continuity were strengths, but this was at the expense of time to reflect and develop skills. In future projects, Accidental Theatre would prefer a three stage process where this week was preceded by skill workshops and student research, and followed by a second stage where students explored their own interests and ideas in more detail. Richard would also have appreciated knowing more about the other Creative Schools Partnership projects and the programme objectives.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Making a music video required skills in music making, lyric writing, filming, acting and/or dancing. The project worked partly through sub-groups, which enabled each student to find and follow their interest, as well as having a structure for collaboration.

The artists acted as mentors, supporting the students in expressing their ideas.

The project was not dependent on specialist technology. One of the starting points was that the project should only use equipment already available in the school.

Looking at the video, I would say the project:

- Shows strong conceptual skills. The students create a contrast between the regimented classroom and the freedom of self-expression. In effect, they said that the classroom was black and white rather than colour; tedious rather than energised; isolating rather than connective; and judgemental rather than accepting of individual value.
- Shows good empathy. Rather than criticising the teacher in the video, the students seem to be saying that she too would prefer a life lived in colour.
- Shows good narrative skills. The final scene loops back to the initial setting of the classroom, with a twist that when children and the teacher lift their heads the colour (make up) is still visible.
- Gives a nuanced view of individuality and collaboration. A scene of children dancing with ribbons presents a visual symbol of connectivity, while creative face make up expresses uniqueness.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The legacy for the school is:

- The school is planning to have a launch of the video for parents in September.
- The school was inspired to have more projects like this in the future, including using this as a model for future classes. This experience showed the value in developing confidence, maturity and literacy for pupils and strengthening student engagement in English and Drama by bringing the two departments together. It also showed how the different spaces in the school can be used creatively, and gives confidence that arts organisations can work in the school without being disruptive to other lessons.
- The Principal is intending to use the video in her all-school assembly to start the year in September. As she explained: “The video gives me a perfect start. It shows students working together, as a unit. There is a strong team effort. Encouraging one another.”
- The project was too late in the term to affect students’ GCSE choices, but there is a two week window to add subjects in September, and the teachers expect many of the participants to take up arts subjects.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The teachers observed a great increase in confidence in the students. The students stepped up to give the project the flair and enthusiasm it demanded in terms of singing publicly, being filmed, and dancing around the school. The Principal commented that: “Students who would normally hide were filming around the school and other pupils could see them and they weren’t phased by that. A few weeks ago that would have been unthinkable.”

The film is a visible demonstration of the ability of students to work together.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Accidental Theatre assembles teams specially for each project so these artists had not worked together before. The team deliberately brought together highly experienced members – including a team leader who had worked in schools for much of his career – with others new to this setting. This provided professional development for the individuals and a basis for collaboration in the future. This was only the third school the organisation had worked with in three years so the project was highly valuable in enabling them to see the possibilities and constraints.

SCHOOL 7: BELFAST MODEL FOR GIRLS

Post code	Belfast BT14 6NQ
Total enrolments	946
% of students who receive free school meals	61%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	352
Religion	89% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 10% Other
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Landscapes explored students' physical and metaphorical landscapes,
Artists and partners	Anushiya Sundaralingam, visual artist Visits to Clotworthy House, Antrim Castle Gardens, Ulster Museum, the Huge Lane Gallery and the National Gallery in Dublin
Timing	March to September 2018
Age of children	12-13
Number of children	50

CONTEXT

The Principal is strongly supportive of the arts because of its effect on:

- **Wellbeing**. "We need to remember that our central aim is to support the wellbeing of our children. We need to support children to reflect, to see beauty. We know that art and nature reduce stress."
- **Attitudes to learning**. Taking children to galleries and museums is also part of encouraging them to move beyond their comfort zone.
- **Thinking**. "It helps children to think in a different way and the more different ways we can think the better we are. There is no right answer. If they are conditioned to think there is a right answer they are afraid to try."

"The arts help elevate their thinking to a higher place." Principal

- **Talent development**. "Including the arts in school gives more opportunities for people to find their talent. We are all made in the image of Christ so we are all given a gift."

OBJECTIVES

The objectives were to increase students' self-esteem and confidence, develop their thinking skills, and build their social connections. In addition, the teachers wanted to raise awareness of art as a career, and increase students' understanding of the creative process.

The theme of Landscapes was chosen to represent broadening horizons and give a process that was open and encouraged experimentation.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Students were selected because of their ability to commit to the workshops (reasonable attendance and no holidays booked in June), and teachers' judgement that they would benefit.

ACTIVITY

The project consisted of:

- Anu gave a presentation about her work and background to 160 students in year 9. Students had the opportunity to try on saris from Sri Lanka, which is where Anu was born.
- The teachers created a short application form for pupils to express an interest in the next stage.
- Anu ran weekly workshops in class. Students were introduced to techniques such as: ripped paper collage, collages with coloured paper on black card, charcoal on sugar paper and printmaking on tissue paper.
- The students went on four visits: to Clotworthy House, Antrim Castle Gardens, Ulster Museum, the Huge Lane Gallery and the National Gallery in Dublin. The latter was paid for by the school as it was not within the programme's eligible expenses. Parents were invited to join each visit but there was no take up.
- Artworks created by the students was displayed as an adjunct to the school's usual exhibition of GCSE and A level students.
- Anu will create a collaborative piece combining students' block prints.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was special because:

- The school had not worked with an artist for many years. For a while art lost its kudos. Even though the arts department is no longer marginalised, resources are still limited. The arts department only has £2,200 for materials for the 1,000 students for the next year.
- Work was not assessed. The teachers enjoyed the open-ended nature of the process. Art has become more and more focused around assessment so that teachers feels as if they are "drowning in paperwork," although this is changing at GCSE level.
- The school hadn't taken groups on these visits before.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Mixed media is special because:

- It encourages a playful, experimental approach.
- It epitomises choice and flexibility.
- It diverts attention from a focus on material to a perspective of art as a way of seeing and thinking. Anu employed exercises that accentuated these skills, for example, blind drawing (not looking at what you are drawing) and drawing upside down.
- It challenges the assumption of students who think they are not good at art because they cannot draw.
- It allows children with special needs to take part on a level because they are not trying to match something on the board.
- Using charcoal and natural materials makes a link to the subject of many of the images (trees).
- It suits kinaesthetic learners.
- It gives an element of surprise that increases the excitement.
- It gives a broader range of possibilities for each child to find their special talent.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The project has special benefit for the school because:

- The project allowed each student to develop. “The project allowed the students all to feel equal, and all to progress at their own pace.”
- The project gave role models. It was positive for students to see a female artist who has had exhibitions. The artist Elizabeth Magill heard about the project through a friend and wrote a supportive email, reinforcing the sense of artists being approachable rather than remote.
- The project gave students time to develop their work. “We didn’t set out with an idea of what we would end up with. We took our lead from the kids, what would help them most. The methodology evolved. It takes time to understand the kids, and their needs. They trust you and know you will never make them feel bad. No pieces have gone in the bin.”
- The project made cross-curricular links. For example the students researched landscape artists in ICT.
- The project showed how students can become self-directed learners. “At school everything is being assessed. The project gave them more freedom. Knowing the work wasn't going to be marked against someone else’s meant they set their own targets.”
- The project involved parents. Students took homework to show their families.

- The school developed a stronger relationship with Ulster Museum and plans to take more students in the future.
- The school is investigating other venues to show the work, for example, Duncairn Arts Centre.
- The school will display work around its building, for example in the canteen.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

I interviewed 12 students.

Interviewees all enjoyed the project. This was because:

- **They liked the variety**. "I like art more. You get to do more things." "I enjoyed making and seeing different styles of art work, seeing new techniques I would never had tried before like collages." "I always used to think art was one thing. Now I can see it is lots of different things. Anything can be art and anyone can do it if they really try."
- **They had time to develop their work**. "You get more time to work on your art piece." "You get more time to put more effort into your artwork, which is important because you want to do your best. In class it is really hard to do something good." "I didn't like art before. She has taught us to look at things in more detail."
- **Meeting Anu was very special**. "I have never met an artist before." "It is nice to work with someone different. You get to be a different person."
- **Anu helped them improve**. "Anu is really supportive. If you try and give up on your work she pushes you on. She takes you through, giving practical ideas. Instead of telling us, she shows us." "I didn't like art at the start and now I like it. I didn't think I could draw. But Anu made me better. Before I never would have tried to draw. Anu taught me some skills. In class I would be terrible and I probably wouldn't even try. For example, she twisted the pencils." "I enjoyed working with Anu because she was inspirating and supportive, she was always finding ways for us to improve our work but not being mean about it."
- **They loved the visits**. "I loved seeing the new art. It was so pretty and inspiring." "I would never have thought of going to the National Gallery but it was really interesting." "It was so interesting seeing all the different styles. Being able to see the work up close, the texture, the blobs in oil paintings" "I liked the glass installation. It was unique, I had never seen anything before." "I enjoyed looking at the art galleries and trying to recreate the pictures. It was good learning about different artists. I went home and researched different artists. It was relaxing because it was quiet."
- **Being in nature was relaxing**. "I enjoyed going out in nature and looking at something in detail, you really think about it. It really affects you. It is calming, good for your mental health. It is relaxing."
- **They felt free from judgement**. "Art doesn't have to be perfect, if you like it. It is just what you think."

- **They made new friends**. "I talked to people I wouldn't usually talk to. At school you always talk to the same to the people. It is interesting, you get to know the personality."

A couple of students commented that they didn't like the long bus rides because they felt sick. That was their only negative comment.

The project was different from other lessons because:

- **They learnt more techniques**. "There is more detailed working. There is more effort. In art you have to listen to what they are explaining and if you don't understand you are stuck. Anu helps if she sees something you could do more." "Anu showed different ways of doing art. In class you just draw. She knows what she is doing."
- **The work was freer**. "It is more imaginative. You get to be yourself."
- **The project was more relevant to work**. "It can benefit your job."
- **They felt more relaxed**. "It makes me feel calmer. In class I feel I have to really think." "It has been a place where you don't have to worry about anything which is really calming especially being in the fresh air."

The project affected interviewees' learning in other subjects because:

- **They understood what could be achieved with effort**. "I am better in other subjects because this project has boosted my confidence. If I can do well here I can do well in other classes." "If you can do something in art you can do it in English."
- **They worked better in a group**. "I can speak up more. I question things more. I have more confidence in other things too. I am able to be involved in group activities more."
- **They have a way to manage their emotions**. "You can express your emotions in art. When I draw it makes me feel happy. It is like a release. Whenever I am stressed I like to draw and it does calm me down. The project has shown me that I can do this even if I don't have supplies in the house. You can do things you never thought you would have done." "It calms me down. If I am anxious I draw eye brows. I like to express my feelings into my art it helps me get everything out pictures more than words." "Drawing is a way of forgetting anything going on."
- **They associate learning with fun**. "It has made me think about other subjects differently. It is really fun. It is like a break from school you are still learning but it doesn't feel like it because it is such fun."
- **They look forward to school**. "It makes you excited to go into school because you are going to do something different. Some things Anu does the art teacher hasn't seen before."

The project enhanced interviewees' confidence because:

- **They didn't compare their work to other people's**. "Anu taught us you don't have to make something perfect. It is more important to make something unique to yourself."

"Anu taught us the techniques but we saw that everyone did something different." "We can see other people's work and we are not comparing. Seeing other people's work makes you feel better rather than worse. A feeling of sharing rather than competition."

- **They talked to more people**. "It has made me more sociable. I am usually quite quiet. It encouraged me to talk to other people because we have a shared interest. And we have been with them for so long." "I know more people now." "You are more used to talking to new and different people with different perspectives."
- **They gained a sense of achievement**. "It makes me feel more confident because I feel better about what I can do."

Interviewees thought schools should do more projects like Landscapes because:

- **It suits some students' learning styles**. "It teaches you more. It is a different way of learning. Some people like to work off blackboards and others don't. People are different." "Art is important because it is a funner way of learning. It is different from other subjects because it isn't writing. There are lots of ways of learning and not everyone wants to write."
- **It gives them a way to manage their mental health**. "Before this project I never would have thought of going to an art gallery but now I would go on my own. If I was feeling annoyed, I would go to an art gallery for some quiet." "You need art for life because it is important. It is important for your mental health."
- **All children should have the opportunities to be creative**. "Some people don't have the supplies in the house. This project would give them the chance and experience. It might encourage them to be more creative."
- **It helps them reach their dreams**. "It can give children a new chance that they might have aspired to. She can help them do what they have always wanted to do."
- **It helps them be themselves**. "Art helps you to look at things with a different perspective. It is important to be yourself while drawing and in life. You need to be unique when you are doing art, and also in life, no one is the same."
- **Art needs more time than other subjects**. "Art cannot be rushed."

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Every project Anu does is different and her practice is always evolving. She has tended to work with primary schools so Landscapes developed her experience of working with older children.

SCHOOL 8: BLESSED TRINITY COLLEGE

Post code	Belfast Bt15 4DZ
Total enrolments	1271
% of students who receive free school meals	60%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	622
Religion	96% Catholic, 1% Protestant, 3% Other
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creative Learning Project Story-telling, film and video
Artists and partners	Fighting Words Belfast and the Nerve Centre Trips to the Titanic Belfast, Ulster American Folk Park and Newington Day Care Centre
Timing	March to May 2018
Age of children	13
Number of children	15

CONTEXT

This is a large school in a particularly deprived area.

The Principal, Jim McKeever, has a positive view of the role of creativity in engaging children in education. As a Physics teacher, he has a long interest in using the arts to explain concepts that students otherwise find difficult to grasp. “In the 1980s as a Physics teacher I worked with a drama teacher. I knew that if I could harness drama I could appeal to a wider interest.”

This is an amalgamated school. The old school was known for its arts, for its high quality shows. As Jim explains: “I feel, especially for children who don't get an enormous success through academic studies, the arts offer a world of confidence, success and a world where they get to travel. There are well known actresses who went to the school. Without the arts these girls would never have got the chance to be a success. What the arts do is give everyone an opportunity to shine. They allows you to be your best self.”

On the final day of term the Principal puts on a lunch for teachers and governors and Jim will be showing the film from the Creative Schools Partnership project.

“I was blown away by the film. I spent the whole week talking about it. I can’t wait for all the other teachers to see it. It will be quite emotional for them. To show we are anchored in the community. It was such a sensitive project. You should play the film in every school, we will never have sectarianism again.”

OBJECTIVE

The project aimed to improve students’ outcomes in literacy through learning approaches that foster self-esteem; to strengthen links between the students and the local community and develop students’ tolerance and empathy; and to develop the self-confidence of

students to prepare them to take their place in the world as responsible, confident members of society.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Children were selected to give a mix of abilities in literacy, with some children specifically chosen because they needed help with their confidence or behaviour.

ACTIVITY

The project consisted of:

- An introductory meeting with Year 9 students to outline the aims of the project and explore students' thoughts and attitudes about writing.
- Two interviewing sessions at the Newington Day Care Centre. The children taped their interviews and the school had them transcribed.
- Visits to Titanic Centre Belfast and Ulster American Folk Park
- Two sessions at Fighting Words.
- Training sessions for two teachers at the Nerve Centre.
- Debriefing sessions for children in school to reflect on what they had learnt from their visits and workshops.
- Five sessions for the children at the Nerve Centre.
- Premiere of the film at Newington.

Two aspects of the plan were not deliverable in the time: individual passports and an active learning session on Kung-Fu Punctuation. In addition, two of the sessions at the Nerve Centre took half the group, alternating, with the other half going back into class.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was special because of the artform, link with Newington Day Centre, and visits, which were new to the children. The school hadn't done an intergenerational project in the last few years. Newington Day Centre is special because it is local and some of the students had relatives who had been there.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Animation is special because:

- Animation builds on the strong visual skills children already have.
- Animation has an immediacy because the product can be watched as you go along.
- Animation has a familiarity from links to film but a newness because children tend not to have used the software before.
- Animation sets the imagination free.

"With film you are always trying to reel in students' ideas. With animation you are doing the opposite. There are no bounds to imagination." Nerve Centre

- Animation lends itself to telling an emotional story.
- Animation, like film, is empowering because children get to frame what other people see.
- Animation can help to make material memorable through triggering visual memory.

Fighting Words' model is described in the Ashfield Boys School chapter.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school were:

- The two teachers learnt about types of animation, different software, and some of the skills involved in creating a quality piece.
- The teachers learnt about the practicalities of organising a project with the Nerve Centre. Next time they would have a smaller group and perhaps have half days rather than full day workshops.
- The school deepened its relationship with the care home. Before contact had taken the form of a Christmas party for the residents at the school.
- The teachers are planning to use animation in class. They have iPads and will buy one of the animation apps the Nerve Centre mentioned.
- The teachers would like to work with the Nerve Centre again, although this is dependent on raising funding.
- The teachers are hoping to place some of the films on the school website. This is subject to resolving issues around copyright for archive footage used in some of the films.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

I didn't interview the students, but I have insight into the outcomes for students from interviewing the teachers and artists:

- The project brought the pupils together. “At the beginning they were very much boys and girls on other sides. I remember thinking you could tell it was an amalgamated class. By the end, they had to work together. You are not pointing to the fact you are working together, you are just doing the thing and the working together is a by-product. The boys were less boisterous and the girls less shrinking violet as we went along. It made me think that creative projects are the way forward for amalgamated schools.”
- The children demonstrated patience by concentrating on story boarding for a whole day.
- The children showed emotional maturity in how they related to the interviewees. They listened respectfully and were careful to depict their stories sensitively. “There were emotional stories, a woman talking about her dad dying. A husband shot in a The Troubles, a long lost sister found in America.” The children listened attentively even if the interviewees rambled or repeated themselves. The children hid when they were bored. “We were worried that if someone didn’t was boring they would be giving each other looks, and embarrassing the older person, but they didn’t. They were more aware of their body language than you would expect. They were accessing interpersonal skills that they were keeping secret.”
- The children gained confidence from realising the value of the strong visual skills they already had. For example, one pupil was planning the depiction of an interviewee finding her sister in America after 35 years of estrangement. The image they came up with was to have maps of the two countries, with a clock in the middle, the hands of which moved around as the countries turned into telephones and then started to vibrate.
- Creating the animation required that the children have strong reading skills to identify key points. In some cases the text was unclear, for example because the interviewee had Alzheimer’s, and the students had to reconcile apparently conflicting comments for example about whether relatives were dead or alive.
- The children developed their use of symbolism. “ Articulating something that is very visual, you have to use poetic language.”
- The children developed their critical thinking and problem-solving skills.
- The children raised their aspiration by working to a high standard. The Nerve Centre used laser around the images, which gave a sharp edge (instead of a white line).
- The project suited the kinaesthetic learning style of some of the pupils. “The children understand more through doing. When Maths becomes a narrative, they see it. It just makes sense.”
- The project allowed the children to channel their emotions positively. “The funny thing about the arts is that you can get excited. You model that. And it is genuine.”
- The project developed children’s team-working skills. In animation one person does the movements and the other takes the pictures and the two need to be in tune: “One person is the eyes and one is the hands. So you are in unity.” It also requires rapid and light touch feedback. “There is constant direction. So you get good at being critical of someone’s animation without being unkind. Criticism is done quickly so you can’t be

precious." The project demonstrated the value of working together because: "Ideas are contagious and idea generation is contagious."

- The children developed their sense as independent learners.. They were working together towards a tangible end product. They also had to act responsibly with the senior citizens.
- Knowing they were working for an audience gave the children power. "When you have an audience involved everyone is human. Art is an exchange. It is not just a mark. You have a chance to change someone's day or someone's life. And they wanted to have that power. They wanted to have an emotional story. They are aware these stories could go viral."
- The project changed hierarchies in the class because sometimes the less academic students had stronger practical skills and had to help the high achievers. The children gained confidence when they could show the teachers how to use the technology.
- Some students enjoyed the project so much that they decided they wanted to work in care homes. One student is planning to volunteer at the care home.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

The project created a useful model of working across generations for the Nerve Centre.

SCHOOL 9: MALONE INTEGRATED COLLEGE

Post code	Belfast BT10 0JB
Total enrolments	485
% of students who receive free school meals	69%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	196
Religion	51% Protestant, 275 Catholic, 22% Other
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creating a large-scale artwork for the entrance hall of the school celebrating diversity
Artists and partners	Trevor Woods, ceramic artist Brendan McKinley, sculptor Nerve Belfast
Timing	April to June 2018
Age of children	13
Number of children	15

CONTEXT

Malone College is the most diverse school in Northern Ireland. Its students speak 26 languages. This multicultural nature is one of the attractions for parents. 2018 is the 20th anniversary of the school, which it wanted to mark by creating an artwork celebrating its unique character.

The school already has a high priority to the arts, and its corridors are lined with artworks. The Principal, Maire Thompson, said that the project reaffirmed the contribution of the arts in developing the life skills that are as important as academic performance in students' futures. Creativity is a key skill that employers are calling out for and it is important that schools respond to this need. The school is currently reviewing KS3 teaching with the aim of weaving creativity across the curriculum.

"This project is what schooling is all about: allowing students to experience things outside the norm." Principal

The project also gave a model of how schools can contribute to community relations:

"The arts have a key role in community relations. Schools can explore contentious issues through the arts in a way that is less threatening and less formal, and so make these issues less contentious." Principal

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the project were to portray, celebrate and reflect diversity of culture; and to support group work, promoting communication and listening skills and developing literacy.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Year 9 students were chosen because this is a special time to affect interests as students are about to choose their GCSEs. Within the year group, students were chosen to give a range of backgrounds and needs.

ACTIVITY

The project consisted of:

- The ceramist, Trevor Woods, hosted three teachers in his studio for a day to explain his practice and transfer skills. Trevor passed on the tricks of the trade, for example, how to speed up firing so that students do not have to see their work; and how to ensure firing does not destroy pieces.
- The students attended a workshop on digital fabrication with Nerve Belfast.
- Brendan Mckinley ran a workshop playing with different materials.
- Trevor worked with the children for eight full days of creative workshops. This included individual pieces (portraits and houses), but also collaborative and shared designs (fish, sheep and scenery).

The busy time of the project meant that two parts of the plan fell behind:

- A visit to FE Williams Gallery and Studio.
- Making cross-curricular links to other subjects such as Citizenship.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was special because of the length and intensity of the work.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

The special features of clay are mentioned in the case study on St Vincent's Centre.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school were:

- The Principal was impressed with the way the project allowed students to discuss their backgrounds and traditions dispassionately as they thought about how to create

portraits for the mural: "The project opened up dialogue around the students' cultures, and how they perceive themselves."

- Trevor explained how the schools could attain higher quality at modest cost. Schools have a tendency to use cheap brown mud and four colours of glazing. Trevor used white clay and came with 50 colours of glazing. He recommended that schools make fewer pieces and he showed how to recycle clay. Every piece of work that the children made for this project was used in the final artwork.
- The project has replenished the school's supplies for clay-making.
- The school has a dramatic and evocative piece of art in its foyer. The Principal values that the mural depicts individuality and community together so students can see themselves in it but also their place in the group.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

Trevor taught the students skills in working with clay: how to manipulate clay; how to cut, form, join, build; how to use glazes, how to apply them to different textures; how to ensure pieces were finished/fully glazed.

Children developed their social confidence. This happened naturally, for example, because they had to move to where the glaze they wanted to use was placed. One student had just transferred from another school because of bullying and she soon regained her confidence in the group.

I interviewed a group of ten students. Students enjoyed working the project because:

- **They liked all the things clay could do**. "Clay is easier to work with than other materials, faster. You can sculpt it into different things. It is more creative. More versatile." "Working with clay is easier than drawing and you can make anything with it. You can add details easier. With a washing brush you get so many designs."
- **They worked with others from across the year**. The structure of the project meant they interacted with others more than might be the case in class. "It helps your social skills because you get to talk to your friends while doing it." "It increased my confidence because I can talk openly about what I think. Before I was shy. I used to not talk in front of people. I learnt how to talk honestly. You get to show what you are thinking. You let other people know what you are on about."
- **They were working hard but without stress**. "It was fun getting rid of class. You don't have to write down stuff. It is a different type of concentration, you don't really think about it."
- **They opened up creatively**. "You would see other people's stuff and now you are happier that it is unique. Before you might have thought difference was bad." "I don't like people judging my stuff. With clay I don't mind because it is more open and free."

- **The project gave a positive value around difference**. “With self-portraits you get to look at yourself. You never thought you could draw or sculpt yourself. It is fun to see how other people look in clay. Different styles, people do different hair colours differently.”
- **Students said the project created a sense of community**. “What does community mean? Working as a whole rather than individuals. The project brought us all closer together. Talking to people you never thought you would talk to.”

Students thought schools should do more projects like this because they are fun, bring people together, increase students’ confidence, help them to develop skills they didn't know they had and give students the freedom to express themselves.

“This kind of project brings people together. People get to use their personality working with clay.” Student

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Trevor sharpened up his approach to planning. Full day sessions require an enormous amount of thought.

SCHOOL 10: ST. COLM'S HIGH SCHOOL

Post code	Belfast BT17 0BT
Total enrolment	366
% of students who receive free school meals	72%
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	359
Religion	No data
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Production of an online cookbook
Artists and partners	Dolan Heaney, chef Colin MCguiver, Sheena Kelly Wheel Works
Timing	April to June 2018
Age of children	13-14
Number of children	10

CONTEXT

The school has just refurbished the arts department. The new principal, Adrian Walsh, emphasises that the school is very open to the arts. Teaching often uses a thematic approach, which brings in creativity. For example, they had a theme of 'Christmas' which brought together lessons on Science and Maths and Art. Adrian believes that: "The arts are a way of getting young people to think in a different way.' He is keen to take the project forward, to repeat it with another group.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives for the project were for the students to contribute to two of the School Development Plan Priorities:

- SDP Priority 1: 'continue to foster high self-esteem and expectations among pupils, parents, staff, governors and the wider community'
- SDP Priority 4: 'to increase the pupils' range and levels of achievement generally'.

The background for the project were a series of publications showing a need for students and their families to improve their diet. The National Diet and Nutrition Survey carried out on behalf of the Food Standards Agency in Northern Ireland and Public Health England found that Northern Ireland females aged 11 to 15 years had the lowest mean intakes for iron, calcium, vitamin D and fruit intake, and the highest rates of consumption of sweets, chips and other fried foods. Studies also found that Northern Ireland 11 to 15 year olds consumed only 2.3 portions per day of the recommended 5-a-day target and that fat intake was highest in teenagers from deprived areas.

Senior management met and decided they would like to find a creative way to address this rise in unhealthy eating.

DESCRIPTION

SELECTION OF STUDENTS

Students were selected because of their enthusiasm for cooking and their commitment to eating more healthily. The school was aware from the beginning that the project would help to provide a pathway to careers in the hospitality industry.

ACTIVITY

The project happened on two afternoons a week (12:30 until 3pm) for nine weeks. The elements of the project were:

- An introductory section discussing what the children eat and what constitutes a healthy diet, using the Eat Well guide. This also set out the aims of the project, which were to create an online cookbook that would be on the website – available to the whole community - with recipes for five breakfasts, lunch and dinners.
- Sessions in the computer room where students researched possible menus.
- A presentation from the chef. He showed the amount of sugar in foods and explained the importance of planning. He commented on the nutritional value of students' ideas.
- A visit to the St George's market. This, and other parts of the project, were filmed by Wheelworks.
- Sessions of training where Wheel Works showed the teachers how to create and edit films.
- A session with the photographer explaining how to photography the food.
- A series of classes to refine ideas for the cookbook and test the recipes.
- Time for Wheel Works to edit the film.
- A launch event to which families were invited. The chef cooked some of the recipes and explained his career path and how to get into the industry.

EVALUATION

WHAT WAS SPECIAL ABOUT THE PROJECT DESIGN

The project was unusual because it took a creative and professional approach to Home Economics, which might be considered a low status subject in schools. It also allowed the teacher to work in depth with a small group of students who had a real passion for the subject. Working with Wheel Works gave the school access to specialist equipment that it does not have.

WHAT IS SPECIAL ABOUT THE ARTFORM

Cooking is special because:

- It is creative but not usually seen as within the arts[6].
- It has a direct link to the hospitality industry, which is a major employer nationwide.
- It has a daily link to children' and families' lives and wellbeing.
- It is multi-sensory, adding taste and smell to the visual, auditory and kinaesthetic elements at the heart of other art forms.
- It is a social and cultural activity that can divide or connect people.

OUTCOMES FOR THE SCHOOL

The outcomes for the school are:

- The school has the online cook book and a video of the students' journey.
- Information on the project will go on the school's Twitter and Facebook.

"Film is a natural artform. The documentary shows the kids working together. It is a great platform to see the journey. It encouraged students to reflect more and gave different angles on the project." Vice Principal

- The school saw the value of the visits for the students. This project has motivated the teachers to consider taking more children to St George's Market, and to think about other visits for example to allotments or food fairs.
- The project encouraged the teachers to reflect on the Home Economics syllabus, for example, to make a stronger link to local produce.
- The project showed the teachers how they could use IPads, which they already have, to create films in class as part of subject-specific learning.
- The project gained positive media coverage in the Irish Times and Colm News, which is good advertising for the school.
- The school developed a new relationship with Wheel Works, which was introduced by the programme coordinator.
- The Coln Neighbourhood Partnership came to the launch and are interested in replicating the project.

OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

The outcomes for the students were:

[6] Other than in performance art, such as the work of Bompas and Parr: http://bompasandparr.com/

- The students increased in confidence from speaking to camera.

"I just loved seeing the children smile and having more faith in themselves." Teacher

- The students developed skills in photography.
- The students became more open to new foods and new experiences.
- The students have been cooking these recipes at home and have encouraged their families to eat fewer take-aways.

OUTCOMES FOR THE ARTISTS/PARTNERS

Wheel Works tends to work in the arts around the subject of wellbeing. The project showed how they can strengthen their impact by making a link to eating and Home Economics.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATION

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CONCLUSIONS

The pilot was a success in terms of the individual project objectives and outcomes for students and parents.

The pilot engaged 180 children in a sustained participation and reached a wider group through performances, exhibitions and conversations. This gives a unit cost of £333 per funder, which seems exceptional value given the contact hours and the transformative effect on some of the students.

The programme exemplified good practice in schools creativity. The quality of the projects was substantially higher than we would expect from a pilot programme, which we attribute to the experience of the project coordinator and contacts in the Arts Council.

The late start of the programme, which pushed work to the busiest time of the school calendar, reduced the scope for wider impacts – on families and communities - to develop. Launching the programme in September/October will give more time for planning and relationship-building.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The programme should be continued with an initial term of three years.
2. The structure should be: the existing ten schools should be funded for the three years to continue to embed creativity in learning (across the arts departments, in other departments, and to apply lessons about how to engage specific students) and also to act as ambassadors to a wider group of schools; applications for project funding should be organised for years two and three, with the aim of bringing a wider group of schools into the programme.
3. The good practice points of the pilot programme should be retained: clear objectives linked to School Improvement Plans, careful choice of a targeted group of young people, employment of professional artists, sustained engagement prioritising depth over breadth, and multiple contacts within the schools including principals.
4. Application criteria should be extended to ask about what contact with parents is planned during project delivery.
5. A project coordinator should be appointed for the length of the programme.
6. A programme evaluator should be appointed for the length of the programme. The evaluation should include follow up evaluation of students to see if outcomes were sustained.
7. The schools should give more attention to legacy. Project teams should have an explicit discussion about legacy at the start of the project and should create a legacy plan that includes opportunities identified as the project evolves.

8. The programme should include a set of events to share and develop learning. Subjects should include: the importance and process of using creativity in schools; how artists and teachers can work together to support the development of both; how to involve parents in projects; and how to use projects to bring new audiences to arts organisations.

APPENDIX ONE: INTERVIEWEES

Mercy College, Belfast	Principal	Martin Moreland
	Teachers	Andrea Fryers Sarah Mckeever
	Ulster University	Patricia Meir Syd Trotter Dr Rosemary Moreland
	10 students	
St Joseph's, Derry	Principal	Darmian Harkin
	Teachers	Orla Donnelly Jerry
	Artists	Leona O'neill Jim Mccafferty
	5 students	
St Vincent's Centre	Headteacher	Brona Donegan
	Artist	Ann-Marie Robinson
	3 students	
St Cecilia's College, Derry	Teacher	Juliette Barber
	Bounce Culture N.I.	Kwame Daniels Julien Raux Gary Curram
	5 students	
Ashfield Boys	Principal	Jo Mcgolgan
	Teacher	Jude Rainey
	Fighting Words	Marnie Kennedy
	10 students	
Ashfield Girls	Principal	Alison Mungavin
	Teacher	Sam Fitzpatrick Donna Kelly
	Accidental Theatre Company	Richard Lavery
Belfast Model School For Girls	Principal	Paula Stuart
	Teachers	Sylvia Wilson Fiona Ward
	Artist	Anu Sundarlingham
	12 students	
Blessed Trinity	Principal	Jim McKeever
	Teachers	Gilah Mccarroll Grainne Gilmartin
	Fighting Words	Marie Kennedy
	Nerve Belfast	Jennifer Mcalorum Karen Kingham
Malone College, Belfast	Principal	Maire Thompson
	Teachers	Brian Pendleton Deborah Swift
	Artist	Trevor Woods
	10 students	

St Colm's High School	Vice Principal	Adrian Walsh
	Teacher	Cecila Crudden
	Wheelworks	Sheena Kelly