

Creative Schools Partnership

Evaluation Report

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Introduction

Background

The Creative Schools Partnership (CSP) Programme has been running since 2017/2018, funded by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland (ACNI), Education Authority (EA) and the Urban Villages Initiative (UV). This tripartite relationship combines sector expertise and relationships with an area-based approach.

The Urban Villages Initiative is designed to improve community relations and develop thriving places where there has been a history of poor community relations, 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). Urban Villages consulted with the local community and engaged a wider group of stakeholders to create Strategic Frameworks based around the challenges and strengths of each place. These frameworks were designed to strengthen the conceptual and practical connections between delivery by central and local government and wider stakeholders in support of the TBUC Strategy's overarching priorities as well as PfG outcomes.

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).

Urban Villages' decision to fund Creative Schools Partnership was consistent with the results of its community consultation, with schools and education identified as key priorities, and arts and culture a strong theme in the proposed community-led projects¹.

The programme goals were to:

- Improve outcomes for young people living in designated Urban Village areas.
- Support the delivery of school development priorities.
- Strengthen connection between young people, post-primary schools and the local community.

¹ [Urban Villages Initiative Strategic Frameworks | The Executive Office \(executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk\)](https://www.executiveoffice-ni.gov.uk/urban-villages-initiative-strategic-frameworks)

Every area highlighted the importance of schools: as a community resource, as a conduit to engage parents, including bringing different communities together – across schools and because of their role in ensuring young people have access to the full range of educational possibilities.

- Contribute to key aims of the Urban Villages Initiative which include fostering positive community identities and building community capacity.

Creative Schools Partnership contributes especially to Urban Villages' objective around "Fostering positive community identities" because of the unique ability of the arts to provide uplifting, engaging and uniting experiences, and because of the programme's focus on young people, who will provide the future identity of these areas.

The funding position of Urban Villages is uncertain. The capital programme won't finish until at least 2027. The Executive Office prepared a three-year budget for UV until March 2025, with consolidation continuing beyond this. This shows an intended direction, but the political situation means this has still not been signed off.

A pilot Creative Schools Partnership programme ran between January 2018 and October 2018. A three-year programme ran between September 2018 and August 2021, with eleven schools. This two-year phase two ran until June 2023. Year one of the Creative Schools Programme supported activities in 11 of the 12 eligible schools located either within a core area or wider areas of influence². A 13th school was invited to join in September 2019, at the beginning of the second year.

Evaluation reports relating to the pilot and each of the subsequent four academic years can be obtained on request from ACNI. There is also an interim report summarising findings by themes.

The brief

The requirements for the evaluation were to:

- Clearly define programme objectives and establish a logic model in consultation with key partners.
- Design ways of measuring programme outcomes that can be applied across participating schools and include all stakeholders (teachers, children, parents, artists and local community).
- Ensure learning is captured in order to improve the programme and create a sustainable legacy.
- Document processes employed and outcomes achieved at both a school and programme level, recognising key partner objectives.
- Ensure necessary ethical and confidentially safeguards are in place.

² There are two defined areas within each Urban Village area: The core area provides a focal point for action and investment within each area. The concept of a wider area of influence, which is not sharply defined, acknowledges that thriving places require wider connection to both physical and social assets.

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.
- 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 schools.

There are four new chapters this year:

- Community building events.
- Methodology.
- Reflection on artists' skills.
- Pupil survey.

Programme Activity This Year: Community Building

Introduction

The Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, organised five events to strengthen the links between Creative Schools Partnership stakeholders.

Bringing schools together

The Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue in collaboration with Patricia Meir, organised three full day's activity for students of Creative Schools Partnership schools to come together, share their experiences for the programme and attend joint creative workshops.

The first Belfast event took place at the Linen Hall Library on 23rd February, with 16 KS3 students from St Vincent's and Ashfield Girls. The event was facilitated by Christina Nelson and Rob Crawford.

Activities included:

- Physical warm ups such as stretches, yawns and a Splat circle game.

"Communication skills started with developing the physical moving through to the oral. By the end of the day's session, both schools were integrating fluidly on all communication levels to the point that numbers and addresses were being exchanged." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observation form

- Drama exercises including helping children to self-identify as creative, creating and combining a rhythm, composing and presenting individual and small group narratives.
- Having a tour of the building, the oldest library in Belfast.

The second Belfast event took place at the Duncairn Centre on 29th March 2023, with 18 Yr 8, Yr 9 and Yr 10 students from Mercy College, Boys' Model and Blessed Trinity. The event was facilitated by Sheena Kelly from Du Dance and Jazzmin McClure.

Activities included:

- Warm up exercises where students introduced themselves with their name and a movement symbolising their interests.
- Discussion of skills pupils developed from the Creative Schools Partnership project, the challenges they experienced and overcame; and what they would like to work on in the future.

- Presentation exercises on the stage e.g., speaking about themselves for 30 seconds, giving three words to summarise Creative Schools Partnership. The words were: confidence, enjoyable, bubbling, creative, teamwork, interviews, painting/art, filming, talking.
- Freeze frame and tableaux exercises.

The Derry event took place at the Old Railway Station Community Centre on 28th March 2023, with 20 Yr 9 and Yr 10 students from St.Cecilia's and St.Joseph's. The event was facilitated by Ayesha Mailey and Dan Ferguson.

The activities included:

- Warm ups including shaking the body down, breathing exercises from martial arts and circles exercises.

"There is no music without silence; there is no movement without stillness." Ayesha Mailey, artist

- DJing session e.g., making and transferring sounds around the room.
- Choreographing movement and choosing music to accompany it.

Students from the different schools integrated and worked together during the sessions.

In addition, Marie organised a meeting that brought principals from the three schools in North Belfast together on 23rd June, 2023. This muted the idea of having a celebration event to share the work from the five Urban Village areas with a wider audience, which was supported.

Bringing artists together

The Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue in collaboration with Patricia Meir, organised a Zoom meeting for artists to discuss the challenges and achievements of Creative Schools Partnership.

Presentations

- Both the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, and the Head of Community Arts and Education in the Arts Council, Patricia Lavery, made a number of presentations throughout the year which involved the dissemination of the work involving the creative schools. These included:
- Presentation at the Education and Creative Industries event in Belfast organised by the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment
- Guest speaker at St. Colm's Prize Day and at Ashfield Girls Junior Prizegiving.
- Presentation for the Urban Villages Initiative.

- Cork-presentation as part of the Learning Cities Shared Island initiative with Cork, Dublin, Limerick, Derry and Belfast
- Edinburgh-presentation to other Arts Council reps from Creative Scotland, Arts Council Wales, Arts Council England and Arts Council Ireland.
- Cultra-presentation to the Independent Education Review Panel as requested by the Cultural Arts and Heritage Task Force.

Evaluation Methodology

Introduction

The evaluation methodology consisted of:

- Review of documentation: applications, assessment systems, School Development Plans and planning documents.
- Creation, application of and analysis of observation forms.
- Interviews with head teachers, teachers and artists.
- Survey of pupils.

This evaluation adopts a Scientific Realist epistemology as described by Pawson and Tilley (1997)³. This suits the arts because:

- It provides an iterative structure to build up an 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 is rooted in 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 minimize 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

³ Pawson, Ray (2006) *Evidence-based Policy. A Realist Perspective*. London: Sage.

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.

Face-to-face

In 2018 and 2019, the evaluator interviewed teachers and pupils face-to-face. Fieldwork was carried out over a four day period at the end of June – a short window between the end of projects and the end of term. An additional round of head teacher interviews was carried out in September.

Pupil interviews were generally carried out in pairs, a method called democratic interviewing, which has the advantages that:

- The interviewees outnumbered the interviewer, starting to address the power imbalance between adults and young people.
- Interviewees could and did prompt each other. This prompting was partly in the form of reflection, including discussion about the meaning of, elements of, or influences on outcomes such as wellbeing; and partly in the form of reminders, where one young person referenced what the other had said or done during the project.

The evaluator kept a verbatim record of interviews, designed to capture the language and connections made by interviewees.

The two evaluations encompassed 127 interviews, which the evaluator synthesised using a Scientific Realist structure of outcomes, mechanisms, and context.

Observations

The structure of themes was used to create an observation form, which the programme manager used for her visits to schools. The advantages of observation forms are that they:

- Captured the detailed process of CSP projects rather than relying on retrospective recall. This included recording the artist/facilitator skills, an underexplored subject that is a particular focus on the evaluation this year.
- Acknowledged and valued the strong knowledge and expertise of the Programme Director.
- Encouraged reflection during the projects.
- Gave a transparent methodology that the funders commented on.

Observation forms were often very detailed, including accounts of the explanations given by artists and comments from young people who spoke to the Programme Director.

Zoom interviews

In 2020, the pandemic meant that face-to-face interviews of teachers were replaced by Zoom interviews. The evaluator soon noticed that this was a superior method (given the existing conceptual structure gained from the initial face-to-face interviews) because:

- The interviewing schedule could be more flexible, which was more considerate of the schools and could include more members of the delivery team.
- Interviews could be scheduled over a longer period of time. Four days of fieldwork was changed to two weeks of interviews.
- Interviews could be longer because of the longer time period and lack of time lost to travelling. Lead teacher interviews changed from 20-30 minutes to an hour or more. Head teacher interviews changed from five minutes to 20-30 minutes.
- Confidentiality, if needed, was stronger given that each person or group was interviewed separately.

Paper/online survey

In 2022, several lead teachers mentioned a desire to survey CSP pupils in order to capture the feelings and impacts they had already observed. The evaluator supported this process by creating a short questionnaire for pupils, focused on outcomes.

It would be possible to ask about outcomes as binary questions, for example:

Did the project enhance your wellbeing?	Yes
	No

The disadvantages of this format are:

- The question assumes a shared understanding of the outcome word. It is possible to add a definition to the question, but this then produces a cumbersome effect, where the complexity of the issue is reflected in the question, but not the answer.
- Respondents with low Judgement personalities tend to find this binary format stressful.
- Binary questions like this have higher social desirability bias. Respondents have strong feelings about a project can fill in the questionnaire quickly, positively or negatively, without reflection.
- The evaluator cannot test the answers. For example, they don't know if the respondent misread the question, or had any foundation for the response.

The format the evaluator used was:

6. Did the creative learning project affect your mental health/wellbeing? Please tick all that apply	No Yes, I gained a sense of achievement Yes, I felt a stronger feeling of connection to others in the group Yes, I felt better from talking and being creative Yes, I found techniques/strategies to manage my mental health Yes, negative change Comments:
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The advantages of this format are:

- The answer codes act as definitions and memory prompts, so reducing the stress for the respondent and increasing the completeness of the data. The Psychological Theory of Survey Responses explains that respondents tend to process the question in terms of the words used so lack of familiarity with the language can result in a 'no' answer rather than an attempt to think around the question. Having answer codes increases the chance of mapping onto respondents' language and encourages reflection.
- The answer codes increase the likelihood that the comments will be detailed and precise.
- The pattern of responses across the answer codes gives added confidence in the responses. There is often a meaningful pattern across responses, e.g., a clustering around social codes, or in this case, a clustering around motivation, which helps to not only measure the outcome but also explore the mechanisms behind the outcome.
- The answer codes given different ways of thinking about the outcome, so increasing the chance that one or more will be relevant to the respondent.
- Listing all the elements has lower Social Desirability Bias than would be the case if the survey asked each element individually, where a string of negative responses might start to feel uncomfortable to the respondent.
- Responses can still generate a total figure for respondents who said the project achieved the outcome (100-the number of "no" responses).

Note that the language is clear that the survey is evaluating the project, not the young person.

School 1: Blessed Trinity College

Previous projects

Blessed Trinity College has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Post code Belfast BT15 4DZ

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	1271	1239	1288	1274
% of students who receive free school meals	60	58	58	52.7
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	622	659	545	200 (stage 1-3)
Religion	96% Catholic, 1% Protestant, 3% Other	95% Catholic, 0% Protestant, 5% Other	89% Catholic, 1% Protestant, 10% Other / Unknown.	86.4% Catholic, 1.3% Protestant, 12.2% Other / Unknown.
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creative Learning Project Story-telling, film and video	Colours of the Mind- students exploring their emotional and personal relationship with colour through print making	Making Connections - using writing as a way for students to reflect and connect	Ways to Wellbeing
Artists and partners	Fighting Words Belfast and Nerve Belfast Trips to the Titanic Belfast, Ulster American Folk Park and Newington Day Care Centre	Nerve Belfast Belfast Print Workshop Newington Day Care Centre	Bounce Culture NI Fighting Words	Bounce Culture, Du Dance
Timing	March to May 2018	March to June 2019	January to June 2021	
Age of children	13	14	11-12	
Number of children	15	15	22	

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 1: Logic model for the project: Ways to Wellbeing

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (film-making, DJing, animation, dance and creative writing) on Five Ways to Wellbeing Film Teacher CPD and sharing	Number of pupils (target: class of Yr 9 students: 30)	Pupils enhance their wellbeing (including confidence, emotional literacy and positive mental health), develop skills, and raise their awareness of career options in the creative industry The school develops new creative approaches to learning, strengthens interdepartmental working, connections with artists (e.g., from Bounce Culture, Nerve Belfast, Fighting Words and Du Dance), feeder primary schools and the community (Urban Villages, Newington Day Centre)	Contribution to School Development Plan focus on positive mental health and wellbeing

Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: pupils' immersion in the creative process; students feeling that they are ambassadors for creative learning and having a high profile; building on previous projects' community links; and intergenerational working.

Process

Description

The project built on the school's previous work on Creative Schools Partnership: they continued to work with Du Dance and Bounce Culture and film-making as well as expanding and making more explicit the focus on wellbeing. Health and wellbeing are a big focus in the School Development Plan.

"We wanted to continue with filmmaking because we knew from previous years that it is empowering and gives a lot of learning along the way." Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher

In part because of the restrictions of COVID, the teachers chose a Class 9 bubble for year one of the programme, rather than the previous process of selecting individual students who would benefit. The number of pupils involved was almost twice as many as for previous projects (28).

The **year one** project was based on Five Ways to Wellbeing⁴, with activities structured to explore each of the ways (Connect, Be Active, Take notice, Learn, Give). Film gave a continuous thread through the project by capturing the process and supporting pupils' reflections on their experience.

The year one project activity consisted of:

- Workshops with Bounce Culture. There were 14 workshops with 28 participants.
- Workshops with Sheena Kelly and Sean O'Neill, dancers from Du Dance. There were four workshops with the 28 students.

The **year two** project was designed to "go deeper" in its exploration of dance. The school selected students individually because they would benefit from, or contribute to, the project, which the school thinks has more impact. There were 16 young people in the group.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Dance workshops for pupils and care home residents separately. There were three workshops with each group.
- A meet and greet for pupils and care home residents and then four dance workshops of the two groups together.
- Filming of the process by artist, Graham Ginty, working with a team of students.
- High profile through having the project twice featured on BBC News.
- Premiere of the project film in the school, with care home residents, pupils and their families present as well as Urban Villages coordinators.

The school had all the support it needed for the programme.

"Marie is very supportive, always on call. She is always trying to push us to do more." Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher

Going forward, Gilah would like to explore ways to add more diverse content to the project.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality **for year two**:

- **Clear structure.** The participants progressed from working individually to pairs, and then group work. The project overall was well structured, with the artists working separately with the young people and older generation before bringing the two groups together. Giving an example of a specific session, the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue observed a dance session in January 2023 and commented that the structure was very

⁴ [Five ways to wellbeing | New Economics Foundation](#)

strong: “Began working in a circle and playing games using our names and then progressed in to working with a ball and then bean bags to promote coordination and memory.”

- **Consistent engagement.** Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher, observed that the dance artists were highly skilled in leading students step-by-step towards relatively sophisticated choreography. For example, they used games to relax the students and remove the sense of exposure from expressing yourself physically; they taught skills one-by-one so that the pupils could tackle challenging moves like lifts safely; they paused often and discussed the work and reactions so that pupils could process their learning, and no-one was left behind. In the January 2023 session, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue observed that pupils were all enthusiastically engaged throughout and the pace was “sharp and consistent”. Similarly, for the February observation: “All of the students and the older generation engaged throughout and there was a tremendous feeling of unity and kindness as they interacted and supported each other.”
- **Self-directed learning.** Students had considerable responsibility, for example, they carried out the interviews and set up the equipment for filming.
- **Time for questioning.** Sheena Kelly, dance artist, explained that she designed the sessions to have plenty of time for questions: “No questions were off the cards. They asked about dementia. They asked about what to do if they need to go to the toilet during the sessions! Having that time for preparation meant that they were more comfortable when we went to the joint sessions.”

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Working in a day centre.** Care homes are always short of space. Bringing the pupils into the room with the older people naturally decreased the amount of space, although it also added to the sense of excitement.
- **Timetabling.** Having the BBC in the final session meant that the film team (artist and four students) only had ten minutes for the project film, although the young people rose to the challenge and spent the waiting time brainstorming ways to make the best of the limited time. Working with the community is also challenging in terms of timetabling because: “You are acutely aware that leaving class to facilitate the programme, you are missing your other students.” Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have five observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue.

Date	16th Jan 2023	February 2023	27 th Feb 2023	1st March 2023	6 th March 2023
Artform	Dance	Dance	Dance	Film making	Dance
Year Group	Year 9	Year 9	Year 9	Year 9	Year 10
Length of Session	2.5 hours	1.5 hours	2 hours	Nearly 2 hours	1.5 hours
Number of Students	18	10	12 students and approximately 16 older people	10	15

The impacts on the pupils are:

- Communication skills.** Across the observations, the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observed development of listening skills, adaptation of plans, reflection, physical communication and presentation: "Communication skills were developed through a variety of activities. Following the warming up exercises Sean led a short session on movement. He communicated a series of instructions, demonstrating them, which require the focus and attention of all students. They were developing their listening skills and coordination. Rhythm was important so every student had to concentrate and keep up. The group was divided into three and each group was given a series of words e.g., Reach, Kick, Jump, Twist, Melt They had to organise themselves into translating these words into actions using all parts of their bodies. So, they were learning how to use their bodies to communicate expressively... Communication skills were also developed when the young people worked in the same groups recording their thoughts and writing them up from their first visit with the older generation with whom they will be working. They had to converse and think back to their conversations and record what information they had gleaned in three areas. "From the February 2023 session: "Part of the session focused on a conversation structured between the two generations.. They had to listen and respond accordingly to their companion, taking time to listen and to begin to develop a rapport."
- Critical thinking.** The dancers worked with the students to think about what they wanted to know from the older generation and to agree a set of questions. The three generic questions that they agreed on were: "What are your memories of being a teenager when you were around our age? Do you have good memories of your school days that would like to share with us? What advice if any would you give to us as teenagers today?"
- Empathy.** The sessions developed empathy especially through the contact with the elderly people. For example, in the January 2023 session, the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, recorded how the artist, Sheena, introduced the task of dancing with the elderly people: "Empathy skills were discreetly introduced when each student was given a chair, asked to remain in their groups and to revisit their words, but this time their movement was restricted to the chair." Sheena started the combined session

with an exercise in which participants identified what they valued in their lives, which quickly showed that the pupils and older people had more similarities than differences.

“The pupils were so sensitive with the older people: they were holding people’s feelings in their movements.” Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher

“You can see how protective the young are of the older people, talking to them, reassuring them and making sure that they feel comfortable and confident when they practice and create their movement sequences.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of February session

“They had an exercise where they worked in pairs (a student with their older partner) mirroring their movements which showed a more intense and intimate connection. They had used words to stimulate and create their individual movements such as Help, Support, Circle, Ripple, Care and Love. The intimacy that was evident this time between the two parties made their individual duets seem like a waltz. The dance and music took over because language was no longer needed which is a very sophisticated form of communication. They were communicating through their bodies. They were also whispering instructions and encouragement to each other; you could see how the younger generation were responding to the diminishing senses of the elderly.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of March 2023 session

- **Confidence.** The encouragement of the artists and older people and the sense of achievement from the activities seemed to enhance students’ confidence. For example, in the January 2023 session, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, suggested that: “These children come from different classes and so it was even more remarkable what they were able to achieve in terms of the confidence with which they worked with one another proving their ability to be innovative in putting together a presentation for an audience that was in turn going to require them to self-evaluate. The energy of the session encouraged a confidence within all the students to act freely and to experiment with creative ideas and expressive movement.” The March observation: “All of this engagement has had a positive impact on the students’ self-esteem, they know and can see how much the older generation appreciate and trust them. They know that they are making a difference to the older generation and their older partners are openly appreciating often-simple gestures of kindness.”

“Being in a new environment (at Newington Care Home) really elevated the project. It takes an extra sense of courage and students gain confidence from the process and from seeing that they have given something beautiful back to the community.” Sean O’Neill, dance artist, Du Dance

- **Leadership.** The pupils had a leadership role in their interaction with the elderly people: “The movement session focused on the young people taking the lead, they had to think of a sequence of three movements using their hands, arms and upper bodies. Their older partners then had to mirror and copy the movements. Each group got the opportunity to

perform for the whole group. Again, this is collaborative learning, slightly different from some of the other programmes as this is genuinely an older and younger person partnering up to learn together.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, February observation

- **Wellbeing.** Dance enhanced physical and mental wellbeing: “The very nature of the creative expression used in these sessions naturally encourage an immediate feeling of wellbeing. Listening to music and being encouraged to respond in a creative way with your body creates a natural release from tension.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, February observation).

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Confidence in working in the community.** Eoin Fitzpatrick, teacher, noted that his Teacher Training hadn’t covered the subject of working with a community organisation, but after the Creative Schools Partnership project he now understands the process and the benefits.
- **Intergenerational understanding.** The discussions between the groups were wide-ranging. Pupils gained insights into history and were sometimes given life advice. The relationships were strong, with pupils and residents looking out for the individuals they had worked with in previous sessions. One pupil showed the teacher that he had a picture of himself with the care home resident as his screen saver!
- **Interdepartmental working.** The Creative Schools Partnership project touched multiple departments: English, History, PE, Music, Drama and Art.
- **Embedding of creative learning.** As with previous years, the teachers reflected on the benefit from observing the style of artists and realised they can be less didactic and controlling and ask more of the pupils. For example, in April, Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher, taught *Animal Farm* to a class of Yr 10s by asking them to create a story board and stop motion animation for the first half of the book. More widely, teachers have learnt the benefit of framing questions that are open, that leave more space for the young people to reflect and respond. The teachers also gained from seeing the other Creative Schools Partnership projects in the sharing event. Gilah is interested in using podcasting and magazines with pupils.

Impacts on the local community

The connection with Newington Care Home was at the heart of the project.

“This is a shared experience. The Newington residents learnt to dance as much as our students.” Gilah McCarroll, lead teacher

“This whole programme is centred on community. The students have already visited some of the older generation and it these exchanges of conversation that will form stimulus for their work.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of January 2023 session

“Through this type of approach, they are learning about the importance of valuing themselves and the other members of their community. From this experience, you can see that the students are developing a sense of pride and respect for the older generation.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of January 2023 session

“This is without doubt one of the strongest examples of continued excellent community relations.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of February 27th 2023 session

The impacts on the community are:

- **Community cohesion.** Newington Care Home is cross community, so the pupils not only developed empathy and saw commonalities with older people, but also with other backgrounds.
- **Wider connection with the community.** Urban Villages has helped the school make local connections, for example with a gardening group.

Impacts on the artists

Sheena Kelly, dance artist, felt listened to during the project. The school’s initial assumption was that the pupils and care home residents would have one session on their own before coming together. Sheena wanted to have three sessions so that the pupils had a chance to explore their own creative potential and build their confidence before changing perspective to focus on the needs of the older people and their physical limitations. The older people also needed to reflect on how to talk to young people and to understand what was meant by dance, as many assumed it referred to ballroom dancing.

“I like that Creative Schools Partnership has a framework, so you are not going in with a blank canvas, but also has flexibility so you can adapt what you are doing to the group.” Sheena Kelly, dance artist, Du Dance

The two artists met early in the project, as had been recommended last year. This was helpful in refining the brief for the film. It changed from being a dance film to being a narrative with interviews connected to make a conversation. Having this structure allowed Sheena to introduce the questions to be used by the filmmaker into the creative workshops.

The project supported Sheena’s artistic development because she had several intergenerational projects in the past, but all stopped because of COVID. When she went into day centres, staff would typically call her “the fitness girl”, which is a diminution of dance. By contrast, Newington Day Centre has employed her to run two groups a week for five weeks because they observed that the residents gained more from dance.

Sheena valued the Zoom meeting with other artists. Next time, she would like this to happen earlier in the projects.

The project was deliberately designed as a developmental process for Sean O'Neill, who took a more prominent position in the facilitation this year, building on this previous work assisting on intergenerational projects and learning from Sheena, who has many years of experience in this area.

Graham Ginty, film and music artist, has produced documentaries of the Creative Schools Partnership projects over the last couple of years. This was initially a new area of work for him, and has led to many other similar commissions.

School 2: St. Cecilia's College

Previous projects

St Cecilia's College has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Post code Derry BT48 9PJ

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	797	806	828	849
% of students who receive free school meals	63	61	57	55.2
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	154	189	206	160 200 (stage 1-3)
Religion	99% Catholic	99% Catholic	99% Catholic	98.4% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creative workshops and films about mental health	Let's Talk, Conversation 2 – writing and film making	City Smarts	R and R – Recovery and Reignition post COVID-19
Artists and partners	Bounce Culture NI	Bounce Culture NI	Bounce Culture NI	Bounce Culture NI Echo Echo Dance
Timing	March to June 2018	May to June 2019	March to September 2021	November 2022 to June 2023
Age of children	11	13-14	11-12	12-13
Number of children	24	19	Around 150	22

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 2: Logic model for the project: R and R – Recovery and Reignition post Covid-19

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (podcast production, film and music production, journalism) Teacher CPD	Number of pupils (target 50 KS3)	Pupils develop their confidence, oral and written literacy and project management skills and curiosity, enhance their wellbeing (e.g., sense of control) and strengthen their engagement with learning	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities around Teaching and learning to support skills development and mental health for the entire school community

		The school continues work to embed creative learning across teaching, strengthens its community links (e.g., Urban Villages, Bounce Culture)	
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Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: embedding creative learning across the school, using CSP as a model and inspiration; employing artists with a high profile; broadcasting the podcasts through the school's YouTube channel, which has an international following; having students lead the projects, including choosing the topics; and mixing weekly sessions and longer sessions for more immersive learning.

Process

Description

The project built on previous years of Creative Schools Partnership by keeping the relationship with Bounce Culture and deepening the focus on wellbeing. The school selected a Yr8 class of 22 pupils taught by the teacher, Tanya Wakeley, for both years of the project. The class is in the top set and the idea was to give them an experience that would challenge them and bring out their skills.

The **year one** project activity consisted of:

- Workshops with Bounce Culture on podcast production, film-making and music production. 20 workshops were delivered with 22 students.
- A teacher training workshops with two teachers.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Dance/somatic movement workshops.
- Djing workshops.
- Editing workshops.

The school developed the first year's project by increasing the freedom in using music technology creatively and by adding dance. Echo Echo is an important part of the cultural landscape of Derry, where it has been since 1997.

Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, emphasised the importance of being able to work with the artists from the previous year because: "Pupils had built up a rapport with the artists, which meant the process could move forward rather than starting at the beginning again." Like all the lead teachers, Tanya, also gained from the Programme Manager.

“Marie is a gem. I would text her or ring her any time and she always picks up. I have learnt so much from her and she is so positive, which is important because in a school situation, there is a lot of negativity. If Marie left, I wouldn't be so keen to pursue Creative Schools Partnership, and the kids love her.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Coordination between the artists.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, commented in her January 2023 observation: “These two workshops were interlinked and it was obvious that sound planning had taken place between the three facilitators so that the learning for the students was connected and challenging.”

“We made sure that everything felt interlinked. We used the DJing as the starting point for them to respond to the dance. It wasn't just about them mixing sounds, they were listening to the music, thinking about what movement it evoked, setting the foundation for the movement.” Kwa Daniels, Bounce Culture NI

- **Clear structure.** In her January 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, recorded that: “The pace was upbeat and there was lots of variety. In both workshops, the students worked independently, then collaboratively.”
- **Strong engagement.** In her 6th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observed that two students said they were not feeling well and sat at the side-lines at the beginning of the session. “However, it wasn't long before their ailments were forgotten and they became immersed in the fun of their fellow students. Indeed, one of them ended up taking the role as the creative creator for her group.”
- **Self-directed learning.** In her 6th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reflected that: “One of the most remarkable points about this session was the students' ability just to get on with everything, they were not at all reliant on the teacher nor the facilitator, although both of course were there on hand watching and ready to advise if called upon...Never once did I hear the raised voice of an adult except for the instruction at the beginning with the communal exercises. It was like a busy collection of hives all working away independently on their own ideas and taking responsibility for the execution of their work... All of them have been challenged to think, create and choreograph a 3-minute creative piece. The diversity of approach that I observed clearly indicated that these students are thinking for themselves and taking responsibility for their own learning.”

“I watched the sessions on several occasions. The kids were having a ball. It was very much learn as you wish not because of you have to.” Maureen Fox Urban Villages Co-ordinator

“I think of inviting participants into my creative process and how they can make it their own.” Ayesha Mailey, dance artist

“The creative workshops were very immersive, from the minute they started to the minute they finish. As a teacher, you are usually doing all the inputting, but here they were doing all the inputting. I was more on the periphery making sure everything flowed. It was like putting your hands behind your back and letting the children get on with it, allowing them to make and learn from their own mistakes.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher

- **Appropriate space.** In her 27th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reflected on the limitations of classrooms. “The students responded well to working in a larger space in small groups away from the restrictions of the often-cramped classroom.”

Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, said that the project exceeded her expectations in terms of all the learning objectives. A major determinant of the quality of the workshops is the skill and experience of the artists.

“We had the best people and the expertise they passed on was second to none.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** It was more difficult to find space for the project than in previous years of Creative Schools Partnership. Roughly half the dance workshops were held in the classroom because the hall and dance studio were unavailable. In addition, students were not allowed to come to school in their PE kit and had to change in class, which cut into the time for dance.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have one observation from the teacher, Tanya Wakeley, and two from Marie.

Date	5 th December 2022	30 th January 2023	27 th February 2023
Artform	Film and music	Music, dance	Dance and film
Year Group	Year 9	Year 9	Year 9
Length of Session	2 hours	3 hours	2 hours
Number of Students	24	20	20

The impacts on the students are:

- **Confidence.** Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, thought that at the beginning of last year, pupils were shy and inward. This year, in class, she can see that they are more confidence, eloquent and happier constructive criticism from their peers” “The skills they learnt from Creative Schools Partnership, they brought into the classroom.”
- **Emotional intelligence.** In the January 2023 workshop students listened to tracks the group had composed, and were given the tasks of describing the emotion, feeling or thoughts evoked by the music, working independently and then collaboratively, which developed their ability to distinguish different emotions: “The music they said had made them feel, disorientated, excited, energised, as if they were bouncing, spinning and jumping.” (Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of January 2023 session)
- **Teamworking.** In her January 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reflected that: “The pupils in both workshops were developing the skills associated with working together. Many of them articulated about how much easier the learning is when it is collaborative and hands on. Healthy debate was evident throughout.” So, developing teamworking skills was a natural part of collaborative learning, which was a good match with pupils’ learning styles: “Pupils spoke of being happier when they are able to learn together, they are not afraid to take risks and to delve deeper exploring ideas and encouraging each other. The time passed quickly and they were evidently having fun.”

“Key pupils tended to lead the others but it was mutually accepted and respected. Everyone pulled their weight in their own unique way.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, December observation

- **Communication.** In her January 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observed students listening, discussing and using language to describe sound: “This was quite an abstract piece of work to listen to; to translate music into a variety of other forms, visual, language and physical movement was very skillful.” In the February observation: “They talked with each other, laughed and there was certainly a degree of risk taking as they thought of new ideas and experimented. They communicated well, listening and responding offering suggestions and exploring each other’s ideas.”
- **Critical thinking.** In her December observation, Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, explained that: “Every session involved the students in problem solving. At the beginning of each session, they were told what they would be doing and then in groups they collaborated and worked towards a collective goal.”
- **Wellbeing.** In her February 27th observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, emphasised the value of dance for pupils: “I think that creative dance is an extremely valuable element that too often is overlooked within our curriculum perhaps due to lack of professional development and space. In a world where our teenagers are, suffering from an overload of social media and virtual existence this is an area that can give them

a release through joyful self-expression ridding themselves of anxiety and depression through vigorous movement.”

“After COVID, pupils are internalising more instead of getting help, which is not good for their mental health. The Creative Schools has empowered them to talk about taboo subjects with their peers and with the facilitators and Marie.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher

- **Skill-development.** Graham Ginty introduced the students to Filmic Pro, an app for iPads and phones that gives greater control over the use of the camera, replicating elements around focus, light, depth of field and sound that would otherwise require professional equipment.
- **Initiative.** The students have organised their own fundraising activities to purchase DJing equipment so they can continue elements of the project.

“Creative Schools Partnership has given young people the space not just to achieve but to thrive, to tap into the strong part of their own minds, which is often around creativity.” Maureen Fox Urban Villages Co-ordinator

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Creative learning.** Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, reflected that: “I think the main lesson for me is that children learn better working with their peers more closely and that active learning and collaborative work is more successful combined with an environment that is less structured, with less formal seating and table layout. The pupils have clearly shown that they work better when the classroom is less formal and more relaxed.” Tanya believes the whole school has been affected by Creative Schools Partnership because teachers can see the impacts the project has had on the pupils.

“I talked about Creative Schools Partnership at an annual general lecture of the teachers’ union. I believe we have a great opportunity to rejig the education system so it isn’t about bums on seats and assessments, it is about children developing their skills and taking these skills into any area of their schooling or later life. We are on the cusp of being able to achieve that. The pupils from Creative Schools Partnership are now thinking of being artists or dancers or writers, or going into advertising or music, which is brilliant.” Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher

- **Teacher CPD.** Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, said that she was learning about the new technology as much as the pupils. She learnt about podcasts in the first year, and has used that approach in English lessons. The same class is in the process of creating a podcast on Seamus Heaney, with a plan to release it on social media next year.
- **Equipment.** The pupils wanted to have the same DJing equipment that Kwa used, which is industry standard. They set up a school business and raised £300 from cake and iced lolly sales, which, together with money raised by the teacher, allowed this to happen.

The posters they made to advertise the sales would have advertised Creative Schools Partnership, and pupils' enthusiasm for it, to the whole school.

Impacts on the community

The impacts on the community are:

- **Screening.** The film will be screened in the community, perhaps with a nearby Primary School and care home.
- **Community connections.** The school – a teacher and two pupils – gave a presentation about the project to an Urban Villages Reference Group in February 2023.

“Creative Schools Partnership has enabled Urban Villages to be more robust within and between schools and community. It has ensured the community voice is as strong as the pupil voice. It is a collaboration. Working through schools has enabled Urban Villages to take a family approach, which is very valuable.” Maureen Fox Urban Villages Co-ordinator

- **Links between schools.** Tanya Wakeley, lead teacher, said that: “Meeting other teachers on Creative Schools Partnership gives a sense of community.” The school was already working with Lisneal through Shared Education, and continued the relationship through Creative Schools Partnership.

Impacts on the artists

Ayeshya Mailey, dance artist, really appreciated the length of the Creative Schools Partnership project because it is: “more transformative and less transactional than the usual one-off workshop. You can go much deeper into the work and lead them through a creative process.”

Kwa Daniels, Bounce Culture, hadn't come across somatic embodiment before. He was more used to dance as part of club culture: “I loved adding dance. It gets us thinking in a different way about what music does and its impact. It is more individual, rather than a unified field, more intentional.” The experience of Creative Schools Partnership inspired Kwa to develop a project with spoken word, going more deeply into the music.

School 3: Malone Integrated College

Malone College has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Previous projects

Post code Belfast BT10 0JB

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	485	508	628	749
% of students who receive free school meals	69	66	54	54.2
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	196	136	159	224 (stage 1-3)
Religion	51% Protestant, 27% Catholic, 22% Other	48% Protestant, 28% Catholic, 24% Other	44% Protestant, 29% Catholic, 27% Other / unknown	39.4% Protestant, 29.5 Catholic, 31.1% Other / unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Creating a large-scale artwork for the entrance hall of the school celebrating diversity	Mental Health Affects Us All: Race Colour Creed – using practical workshops to address mental health	We are all Equal – print-making	Transition and Diversity
Artists and partners	Trevor Woods, ceramic artist Brendan McKinley, sculptor Nerve Belfast	Claudia Greene, Graphic Designer Nerve Centre Bill Penney, Associate Lecturer in fine art print, UU Belfast Campus Belfast South Community Resource	Anushiya Sundaralingam, visual artist	Kerrie Hanna, visual artist
Timing	April to June 2018	April to June 2019	February to June 2021	September 2022 to June 2023
Age of children	13	13	11-14	13-14
Number of children			66	18

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 3: Logic model for the project: Transition and Diversity

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (visual arts, writing, performance, Music, MIA) Showcase Teacher CPD	Number of pupils (target: 18 Yr 9)	Pupils raise their confidence, develop their creative thinking and literacy skills, and increase their interest in taking arts subjects at GCSE The school strengthens its community links (e.g., Urban Villages, Young at Art, Lyric, Ulster Museum, Donegal Pass Community Centre, BCRC)	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities to Improve student's literacy, thinking skills, communication skills and mental health.

Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: having a mixed ability group; taking an experimental approach, where students can drive the direction of the project; documenting the project and telling a wider audience about it; involving parents; employing an artist who has already worked with the school; having the artists talk about their cultural backgrounds; and having time for students to experiment with different media.

Process

Description

The project explored pupils' experiences of the pandemic and their transition from Primary to Secondary school. Previous Creative Schools Partnership projects gave the school the confidence to adopt a more experimental, open approach this time, with the direction set by the young people themselves.

The **year one** project activity consisted of:

- An introductory workshop with both the artists together. Altogether the school organised 11 planning meetings.
- Attendance at a dance performance about bullying, called *Do as I Say*, at the Lyric Theatre
- Workshops with Ro Owens, a drama artist. There were eight half day workshops with 20 students.

- Workshops with Anushiya Sundarlingam, a visual artist who has been involved in previous projects. There were four full day and one half-day workshops with 20 students.
- Teacher professional development workshops. There were three workshops with two or three teachers at each.
- Two workshops with Young at Art with 16 students attending.
- A sharing workshop on 24th June.

Yr 9s were chosen because this group was particularly affected by the pandemic; and also, because Lynsay Mercer teaches most of them.

The **year two** project deepened the theme around diversity and integration, and was coordinated with work on the anniversaries of the school, integrated education and the Good Friday Agreement.

The year two activity consisted of:

- 11 workshops with artist Kerrie Hanna, creating a stained glass panel for the foyer.
- Three more workshops continuing the process, led by the teacher, Lynsay Mercer.
- A visit to the Ulster Museum to see Royal Ulster Academy of Art Annual exhibition and The Troubles exhibition. Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, created an exercise for participants to find different artworks and guess the price, which led into a discussion of the skill involved in creating artworks and the value of art.

Yr 9s and 10s were drawn from different classes, with Lynsay partly choosing pupils and partly responded to requests from those who had heard about previous projects and wanted to be involved. The group was designed to be diverse. 18 pupils started the project, with three missing sessions because of travelling or pastoral issues.

Lynsay emphasised the support the school received from Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue: "Marie is absolutely fantastic. She is on call any time I need to speak to her. She is very reassuring, very positive, very good talking to the kids. Having her involved increases our confidence that what we are doing is good, meaningful and consistent with the programme objectives."

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Strong structure.** The visual arts project gradually built the foundations for a high quality outcome. The pupils learnt techniques from demonstrations by the artist; developed their drawing and painting skills and relationship with each other; explored ideas around portraiture using clay, printing and other media; strengthened their conceptual skills

using the structure of the zentangle pattern technique; used sgraffito to illustrate the practice of reverse patterning (revealing a pattern by cutting into a black, using magic scrap paper before the glass); and gained inspiration from seeing an exhibition at the Ulster Museum, which included sculptures from their teacher. The artistic product – a stained glass panel 600mm by 700mm - was designed to be modular, so each child had their own section and the pieces were all the same size. Safety was assured by having two zones in each class, with the middle desk, in front of the artist and teacher, using riskier techniques and glass; and by introducing glass part the way through the project so that Kerrie had established a relationship of trust with the students and was also aware of their personalities. Each session started with an explanation of the activities and intended outcomes, and ended with a debrief, including laying out the work and having a complement circle (where one child makes a comment on another's work and the recipient then comments on someone else).

"The safety procedures we designed worked. Not one kid cut themselves on the glass. Everything went the best that it could go." Kerrie Hanna, artist

- **Careful choice of artform.** Stained glass is a vivid but also a forgiving medium – if students didn't like what they had drawn they could wipe it off, which encouraged experimentation and risk taking. It is also a medium with status from its ancient origins and connection to spiritual and religious buildings.

"In religious buildings, stained glass is used to tell important stories. Using stained glass in the Creative Schools Partnership project emphasised that the pupils have important stories to tell." Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher

- **Collaborative delivery.** In the stained glass project, Kerrie worked closely with the lead teacher.
- **Self-directed learning.** Lead teacher, Lynsay Mercer, explains that the school came up with the idea of stained glass, but selected Kerrie in part because her versatility meant she could work in different media: "I planted the seed for the project and the pupils ran with it and nurtured and guided the direction for growth." Each student created a portrait and contributed to the pattern around the edge of the artwork.

Lead teacher, Lynsay Mercer, describes the final artwork as "really high end."

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** The school couldn't have the creative workshops on the same day in the week as this would impinge on one particular subject. Planning the creative workshops therefore took time, although this was allowed for in the artist's fee.
- **The effect of the pandemic.** Katrina Moore, Principal, explains that: "There has been an increase in our need for creative learning due to the pandemic. There has been a huge

rise in the number of young people with mental health issues and many Yr 8s and Yr 9 are coming in with literacy and numeracy gaps in the education due to learning lost during COVID. Given the nature of our students, we are finding that many subjects are having to begin GCSE preparation in Year 10 which then limits a lot of time/scope for more creative activities within the curriculum.”

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have one observation from Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher and three from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	22 nd November 2022	December 2022	24 th February 2023	June 2023
Artform	Visual art	Visual art	Visual art	Visual art
Year Group	9 and 10	9 and 10	9 and 10	9 and 10
Length of Session	4 hours	Full day	3 hours	Full day
Number of Students	22	22	18	19

The impacts on the pupils are:

- Communication.** Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, observed that: “There are a number of students who would generally be very quiet in normal class. During Creative Schools they have increasingly been coming out of their shells.” The artist, Kerrie Hanna, observed that the pupils changed from being quite reserved at the beginning of the project, to sharing personal stories about their lives, including refugees talking about quite traumatic experiences.
- Technical skills.** Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, pointed out that using glass, clay and printmaking required the pupils to put in a good deal of effort to develop their fine motor skills and master the techniques.
- Critical thinking.** Students were encouraged to observe, analyse, evaluate and reflect. For example, Marie explained how the students were thinking for themselves during the visit to the exhibition.

“Each student was given a specially designed booklet to record and write down their thoughts in response to a number of artworks that Kerrie and Lynsay had selected from the work that was on display. This was an excellent tool to get them to start on their own treasure hunt, to find the particular art works and to answer the questions set. They had to look and find the name of the artist, the title of the work, record the materials used and then they had to examine the work more closely and record the textures, colours, patterns and

forms that they could see.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of December 2023 visit

- **Empathy and tolerance.** The creative workshops provided a relaxed context for the pupils to open up. Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, observed that: “The pupils made some interesting comments when studying the patterns from across the world. They commented on the similarities in the repetitiveness of the patterns. This led to them discussing other similarities in cultures and religions.”

“It was so good seeing kids being comfortable in their own skins instead of shying away from talking about how they do things differently. It builds their confidence.” Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher

“Students folded their paper and it was like a miniature book where they began with writing and decorating their name on the front with icons that represented themselves. On the second page, they used colours to represent their mood and on the third page later in the session they created, a team name and decorated that. During the session, they also recorded positive thoughts about each other in each other’s Zine when they had completed their group work task. The focus of the project was introduced as celebrating integration, multi-cultures, multi faith and the importance of community.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of November 2023 session

“From the outset, the young people were being asked for their ideas and encouraged to question and give their opinions about the idea of community.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of November 2023 session

- **Wellbeing.** Lyndsay mentioned three ways in which the sessions supported pupils’ wellbeing: through the frequency with which the artist praised the students; through the sense of calm that prevailed when students were concentrating; and from the content: “The neuropathic pattern creation got the group to think about the function of the brain in relation to mental health and how neuro pathways can be destroyed and created. The link to science and studies on mental health and wellbeing was highlighted and explored through group conversation.” “One student said to Lynsay: “Why can’t every day be like this?”

“Art is a great catalyst for deep and meaningful conversation. The creative process gives the students more confidence to engage in conversation as they busy themselves with the task at hand.” Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher

“Working together seems to lift the spirits and give the students a stronger sense of self and self-worth. They carry each other along on a wave of energy.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of November 2023 session

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Display of artwork.** The stained glass panel is displayed on a lightbox in the school foyer. A lightbox was chosen because it is easily moved, should the school get a new building, as had been muted for some time.
- **Teacher development.** Kerrie Hanna, artist, created plans for each creative workshop to help the Arts teachers apply the techniques in school. Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, is already planning to use glass in her junior classes, although probably on jars rather than using sharp pieces! Lynsay would also use the technique Kerrie employed of having the students create little books (Zines, described above) to structure their reflection at the beginning and end of the project. She also liked the relaxed atmosphere Kerrie created in class, including getting the pupils to cue songs to play while working. Having Polish, Jamaican and other music playing during the sessions motivated the children and stimulated conversations about different cultures. Lynsay had not used the laser cutter before and can see ways to use with it with junior, but also exam classes, for example printing onto clay. One pupil came up with the idea of glazing tiles by dabbing on colours and washing them off which gave such a beautiful effect. Lynsay would use the technique in class and maybe in her own work with clay: “You learn from the kids, that is one of the beautiful things about teaching.”
- **Embedding of creative learning.** Katrina Moore, Principal, said that: “The impacts of creative learning are evident when you walk around the college and speak to the students. Teachers are much more confident to take a risk with introducing creative work into their learning and teaching. Both staff and students say Creative Schools Partnership is one of their most enjoyable experiences at school. I feel it has developed somewhat in recent years, especially as it is such an integral aspect of the taught curriculum, that kids don’t see it as a time out of normal classes/school: it’s just part and parcel of their learning journey.” Katrina describes creative learning as “a real selling point of the school.”

“Creative learning should be an official part of the curriculum. It should happen in every school and every year because the benefits are amazing.” Lynsay Mercer, Lead Teacher

- **Interdisciplinary learning.** Technology was involved alongside Art, for the first time.
- **Profile of the school.** The school was interviewed by the local news as part of publicity organised by the Arts Council of Northern Ireland. Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, used images from the project to enter a competition put out by the Integrated Education Board and was awarded third place.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the local community are:

- **Symbol of multiculturalism.** The stained glass panel is visible to all pupils, parents and other visitors. It celebrates a broad and inclusive identity that goes well beyond Catholic and Protestant. The group involved in the project were partly chosen to be diverse. In addition, the artist and lead teacher explained to the class that they were long standing friends despite coming from different religious backgrounds.
- **Connection with Urban Villages.** Urban Villages Coordinators attended three of the project workshops.
- **Connection with the school.** Lynsay Mercer, lead teacher, made contact with local groups such as Fifth Element and the African Caribbean Society of Northern Ireland through the pupils involved in the project. Young At Art, who delivered workshops in the school last year, invited students from Creative Schools Partnership to their opening event at the Belfast Children's Festival.

Impacts on the artists

This was the first participative project Kerrie Hanna had delivered with young people and the largest panel she had worked on in a community project. She learnt teaching strategies from the school and was heartened that this level of co-creation was possible. The structure of having full day's workshop used her time respectfully as it minimised the travelling.

The Creative Schools Partnership project led to Kerrie being employed by the school to deliver four days of workshops with the GCSE class using stencilled spray painted portraits.

Creative Schools Partnership could support artists more by: giving feedback that the project is on track from the perspective of the funders – the meeting with Marie was very helpful in this regard; have more meetings with artists so they can see what others are doing; including a day in the budget for artists to attend training or develop their skills; and telling them more about the process and results of the evaluation.

School 4: St. Vincent's Centre

Previous projects

St Vincent's Centre has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning. St Vincent's is part of St Joseph's School, with the role of supporting pupils not in mainstream school due to social, emotional and behavioural needs.

Post code BT6 8HN

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	658: overall college (30)	676: overall college (30)	791: overall college (30)	NA
% of students who receive free school meals	100%	100%	100%	NA
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	185: overall college (30)	207: overall college (30)	165: overall college (30)	NA
Religion	78% Catholic, 3% Protestant: overall college	76% Catholic, 4% Protestant: overall college	70% Catholic, 7% Protestant, 24% other/Unknown: overall college	NA
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Artist's residency	A Day in the Life of St Vincent's/A Day in Our shoes -	Emotions in Art – ceramics, music and drama	Exploring Our Community through the Arts and Community organisations
Artists and partners	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist Kwame Daniels, Julien Raux, Bounce Culture NI	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist Kwame Daniels, Graeme Ginty Bounce Culture NI Rob Crawford, Bruiser Theatre Company	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist Rob Crawford, Bruiser Theatre Company
Timing	March to July 2018	March to September 2019	April to September 2021	September 2022 to June 2023
Age of children	11-14	11-16	11-16	11-16
Number of children	10-18	15	18	17

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 4: LOgic model for the project: Exploring Our Community through the Arts and Community organisations

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (clay, drama) Teacher CPD	Number of pupils (target 28) Murals on the school building	Pupils develop their confidence, social skills and wellbeing School develops its sense of, and visual record of community, strengthens its community links (e.g., Bruiser Theatre Company, Urban Villages,	Contribution to the School Development Plan priority around meeting the needs of individual students

Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: engaging students in artistic representations of the familiar, the diverse and the success stories of local people; employing the artist who has been involved in the programme from the beginning and has a strong trust relationship with students; and exploring issues around sectarianism, homophobia and racism.

Process

Description

The **year one project** built on the experience of previous years by retaining the same artists, who have developed a relationship with the pupils, by creating another mural to enhance the school environment and by expanding teacher CPD. This third mural is on the wall near the main office, where pupils sit when they have time out.

The year one project activity consisted of:

- A visit to the Lyric Theatre to see *Do As I Say*.
- Weekly Drama sessions with Rob on a Tuesday. There were 14 workshops in all, with 42 students attending.
- Weekly Ceramics sessions with Annmarie on a Friday. There were 11 workshops in all, 33 students attending.
- Workshops by Action for Mental Health for Years 10 and 11.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Clay workshops. Annmarie delivered 11 one hour sessions and eight half day sessions??
- Drama workshops. Rob delivered 25 one hour sessions, six one and half hour sessions and two times two hour sessions.

- A collaboration with a donkey sanctuary. St Vincent's chose the donkey sanctuary because some of the pupils lacked the self-regulation skills to work with other community organisation, but the school still wanted to go into the community. The donkey sanctuary offered an eight week programme of half day sessions, which suited the school.

"The donkey sanctuary was an ideal community partner for us, and one that both sides are keen to continue. The pupils learnt how their behaviour affects these often-traumatised animals, and were motivated to strengthen their self-regulation so that they could interact sensitively with each donkey. We got the full engagement of each child in the group and one particularly enthusiastic student has taken on the role of School Representative for the donkey sanctuary, so he can explain the personality and needs of each donkey. We could never have made this connection without Creative Schools Partnership because we don't have funding for transport." Brona Donegan, Principal

- **Shared event with Ashfield Girl's.** Working with pupils from a mainstream school was a big achievement for St Vincent's. The school originally expressed concerns because the pupils would feel overwhelmed if they were outnumbered (St Vincent's class sizes are small), but these were all taken on board in the planning of the event.

The project worked with five pupils from Yr8, four in Yr9, six in Yr10 and two in Yr11.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Strong structure.** For example, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, the 10th February session: "This was just a one-hour session, which was more than enough for these students; in order to remain focused Rob had chosen three strong activities that suited them well."
- **Flexibility.** In her 10th February 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, argued that: "Rob was very skilled in how he reacted to the varying needs of the students. He diversified when he saw that one of them wasn't participating. He was also clever with his timings, changing the focus when he felt that the game had run its course." Looking at the structure, the school changed from initially choosing Yr9s to focusing on Yr8s because the small size of the Yr9 group made for a less relaxed (more in your face) experience.
- **Cohesive vision.** The school decided on a theme of rural living and this was reflected in the choice of a donkey sanctuary as partner; Annemarie getting the pupils to make animals during the pottery session; Rob's use of Forum Theatre to breakdown prejudices about rural communities; and the use of the polytunnel as a teaching space (including for Dance) as well as focus for cultivation and cooking.
- **Careful choice of artform.** St Vincent's has worked with a clay artist since the beginning of Creative Schools Partnership. In her 24th February 2023 observation, Programme

Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reminds us that: "Watching the other students at work you could see the benefits of them working with the clay. It was giving them the chance to think through their ideas and to use their hands to touch, explore and shape the clay into the shapes that wanted. They were able to develop their hand to eye coordination when creating their animals and to use the various tools to manipulate their shapes. Clay suits these students and as we have said before it seems to transform them into a more relaxed state where they can lose themselves. The clay is forgiving: you can thump it, press it, puncture it and then start out all over again."

- **Student engagement.** Both artists have sophisticated processes designed to help young people to feel relaxed. Annmarie has a powerful non-judgmental presence that exudes calm. Rob uses humour to make himself the butt of jokes so that students are drawn into the playful silliness, where they learn without knowing it.
- **Self-directed learning.** Also in the February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, explains that: "Annmarie has taken a very definite new direction with the students in that she is transferring the ownership of the work on to the students. They have been taught the skills of coiling, pinching, slabbing, throwing and they are going to shortly learn how to make press moulds. The emphasis this year is on three-dimensional work and Annmarie is keen that instead of one mural that she encourages them to create a three-dimensional exhibition and have the experience of both working towards an exhibition and the setting up of it." As mentioned in last year's evaluation report, St Vincent's discovered they had a pottery wheel. This year, some of the students who learnt how to use it, at Annmarie's studio, have taken a role in teaching others.
- **Skill development.** The longevity of the project meant that Annmarie was able to develop older students' skills further, while also supporting younger students new to clay. This year, Annmarie particularly wanted students to understand the commercial perspective of pottery, including using plaster casts and finishing pieces. The pupils also learnt different decorative techniques this year.

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **COVID.** The pandemic meant that students, who are often rather isolated in their communities were even more uncomfortable with social contact. The school made the decision that the Yr9 group, 80% of whom are in care, were not ready to work with local community partners.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have three observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	10th February 2023	24th February 2023	May 2023
Artform	Drama	Ceramics	Drama
Year Group	Key stage 3	Key stage 3	Key stage 3
Length of Session	1 hour	2 hours	1 hour
Number of Students	8	10	5-9

The impacts on the pupils are:

- Creativity.** In her 10th February 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, recorded that: "Rob brought a chair into the circle and told them that they had to think of the chair as another type of seat in the world other than the one they could see. The students had to think and then mime the actions so that the rest of the group could guess what it was that they were trying to communicate. One young student, Jack was immediately very enthusiastic and you could see by his many responses that he enjoyed thinking creatively. A pilot's seat, A helter skelter ride, a throne, a baby chair, an electric chair a businessperson's chair! Another student Molly was quite daring and mimed someone using a toilet... Rob slightly changed the challenge and asked them to think of what else the chair could become..... Again, through mime the students thought and created a huge range of possibilities. We had the chair as a goal post, a dartboard, a cooker, a fridge, a fire engine, a ladder, a rucksack, a dog walker and even a mole rat! Rob was introducing them to the idea of improvisation."
- Confidence.** Also on 10th February, Marie thought that: "They were delighted when they were told that their choice was very clever and this definitely spurred them on to take more risks and be more daring." One pupil, who has engaged with Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning, won a Northern Irish and then UK award from the Prince's Trust, and openly credits the programme for his raised aspiration.
- Wellbeing.** Interacting with the artist, being active and sharing a positive energy helped the pupils' wellbeing. For example, in her 10th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, suggested that: "dance, when the students are up and moving together it creates a different type of dynamic. Rob too is a strong, energetic person he has a positive presence and is a natural leader who has a wonderful sense of humour. You could not be anything else but uplifted when you have engaged in a drama session with him."
- Critical thinking.** In the 10th February session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, to reflect that: "It was interesting to see how an open-ended task could stimulate sophisticated thinking in students who struggle to communicate in a more traditional way." In her 24th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, emphasises that: "Annmarie always evaluates and looks at what has been previously made before they take their next steps."
- Communication.** In her 24th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reported that students who she had seen in previous sessions were

noticeably “much more communicative”: “He spoke with ease about his ideas and how he was working out how to make his three-dimensional bird.”

- **Engagement with learning.** In her 10th February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, suggested that: “The timing of this session in the morning left pupils in a more upbeat and positive way to embrace their next lesson.”

“I was delighted to see all these students sitting comfortably reading and engaging with each other. They were reading, understanding, evaluating, interpreting, translating, and moving that understanding on and creatively making the script come alive. This was a tremendous example of active learning.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue’s observation of the May session reading Roald Dahl’s *Cinderella*

- **Teamworking.** Rob Crawford, Drama artist, observed that having the Yr8 class take part in the project across the year gave a much strong sense of community in the group, with a sense

“Each student had a different role and were thinking about their character and what type of voice/accent would suit them. They worked collaboratively and helped each other and if one missed out, they corrected one another. Their self-esteem has changed enormously, I think this is very evident in how they are very able to work collaboratively as a team. They are now listening to each other and helping one another.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue’s observation of the May session reading Roald Dahl’s *Cinderella*

- **Behaviour.** Bróna Donegan, Principal, said that the pupils are more comfortable with people coming into the school, which means that visits don’t need to be so closely supervised.

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Embedding creative learning.** Bróna Donegan, Principal, explains that: “We have learnt that the creative approach is the best way to keep students calm. Students are more open to new ideas when they have been working with clay or Drama.” All teachers have had some contact with Creative Schools Partnership, often working with the artists. This shared experience has led to a cultural shift towards more open and collaborative ways of working. Teachers use more open questions and open-ended exercises in class, and might employ Drama games to get a class settled.

“The more I think about it, the more I think that Creative Schools Partnership should be available to all schools. It should be part and parcel of what students do. It has become such an important part of our school environment. I cannot imagine school without it.” Bróna Donegan, Principal

- **Culture of improvement.** The school spent the first four years of Creative Schools Partnership thinking about pastoral care and is now focusing on using creativity directly to improve teaching and learning, which is a priority for the next School Development Plan. Brona is in the process of introducing a Trusted Colleague Network where teachers will observe each other and discuss learning around specific subjects or how to motivate specific pupils.

“Introducing the Trusted Colleague Network is easier because staff have been working together with artists and pupils. It has made them realise that if they are more creative and less rigid, pupils will engage more.” Brona Donegan, Principal

- **Contact with other schools.** St Vincent’s has made arrangements for one of the students to go to Mercy College to study Drama.

Impacts on the local community

As explained in previous evaluation reports, if Creative Schools Partnership improves pupils’ behaviour and raises their aspirations, this will have a positive impact on their communities.

Impacts on the artists

Rob Crawford, Drama artist, was very happy with the organisation of the project. His approach is to be very sensitive to the mood in the room and adapt content accordingly. However, with these pupils, who might have difficulty articulating their feelings, the reaction might only be evident if individuals mentioned a frustration or source of pride later in the day. Having strong communication with teachers and classroom assistants allowed Rob to gain a full picture of the engagement of the pupils.

Creative Schools Partnership has enhanced Rob’s skills because his other facilitation is with Drama students, and he has developed his vocabulary and bank of Drama exercises to explain terms to these less experienced students.

One way in which Creative Schools Partnership could support artists more would be to offer training in inclusive practice (e.g., with children on the autism spectrum) so that the artists could feel up to date in good practice when working with young people who have complex needs.

Annmarie described Creative Schools Partnership as “a breath of fresh air.” Next year, Annmarie would like to raise the profile of the project by having an exhibition of the pupils’ work. She could also explore possibilities near the polytunnel, for example a sensory installation bringing sound into the artwork. She would be interested in knowing more about other Creative Schools Partnership projects.

School 5: Ashfield Girls High School

Previous projects

Ashfield Girls High School has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Post code Belfast BT4 2LY

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	691	699	727	740
% of students who receive free school meals	45	44	44	44.3
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	267	285	158	200
Religion	67% Protestant, 5% Catholic, 27% Other	67% Protestant, 6% Catholic, 27% Other	65% Protestant, 5% Catholic, 24% Other /Unknown	61.9 Protestant, 5.4 Catholic, 32.7% Other / Unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Self Esteem Succeeds -creation of music video	Mind Readers – creative journaling and exploring the science of screen time	Building Confidence Through Communication	Belonging
Artists and partners	Accidental Theatre Company	Residential at Kilcronaghan Visit to MED-Lab Sheena Wilkinson, Author Emer Maguire, Science Communicator	Christina Nelson, Actor Sheena Wilkinson, Author Emer Maguire, Science Communicator	Christina Nelson, Actor Sheena Wilkinson, Author Emer Maguire, Science Communicator
Timing	May to July 2018	May to June 2019	February to June 2021	October 2022 to June 2023
Age of children	11	12	13	14
Number of children	18	24 (also 3 reading buddies from the 6 th form, who also helped with cooking on the residential)	24	24

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 5: LOgic model for the project: Belonging

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (music, drama) Research (interviews with members of the local community about the history of East Belfast) Showcase	Number of pupils (target 24 Yr 8s)	Pupils express themselves creatively, enhance their mental health and wellbeing (including resilience and confidence) and strengthen their critical-thinking and interpersonal skills (including empathy, communication and teamwork) The school models connected learning across the curriculum and develops community links (e.g., Urban Villages, EastSide Learning, EastSide Visitors Centre, the StrandArts Centre, Engage with Age and Dementia Friendly East Belfast, feeder primary schools)	Strengthening of pupil engagement and integration after lockdown, reinforcement of literacy development, and encouragement of positive choices (contribution to School Development Plan Priority Area 3A: Removing barriers to learning; 3B: Improving learning) Increase in collaboration across staff, the school and the wider community (contribution to School Development Plan Priority Area 5: Teacher professional learning)

Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: working with the same class as for previous projects; values affirmation and exercises to strengthen social belonging and connection; offering pupils a range of media; and employing artists with whom students already have a strong trust relationship.

Process

Description

Sam Fitzpatrick, English teacher, thought that the application process was definitely easier this time. The questions and word limits made the task for manageable and having a two-year time frame is very helpful.

The project was framed around a theme of belonging, with the aim of helping the first years to feel at home in the school. The class was chosen because Sam taught them, at this stage. Creative workshops started in March and continued until the end of term in June. 26 students took part, the same group from the beginning of Creative Schools Partnership.

The **year one** project activity consisted of:

- 13 planning meetings including writing the application, briefing the artists, meeting Out Generation Project and attending an Urban Villages Circle Exchange on 10th November 2022.
- Visit to the theatre to see *The Very Old Man with Enormous Wings* in March 2022.
- Eight creative workshops with Christina Nelson, including rehearsals.
- Four creative workshops with Emer, who was also involved in the rehearsals and performance.
- Seven creative workshops with Sheena Wilkinson.
- A performance to open the EastSide Awards, attended by roughly 300 people.
- A Young At Art workshop on mental health. Sam Fitzpatrick met Young At Art at the Urban Villages Circle Exchange.
- A team building activity day at Cranagh Watersports Centre, Coleraine with girls from Oakgrove Integrated School, Londonderry, funded by Cooperation Ireland, after an introduction from Urban Villages.

26 students took part in the project.

The **year two** project continued the theme of belonging. The participants were the same class as the year before, class 9b, a mixed ability class.

Year two project activity consisted of:

- A creative workshop with Christina Nelson in the Lyric Theatre, where Christina was performing in *Snow Queen*. The pupils met the Director and Producer and attended a workshop on puppetry, as well as having a tour of the building to see the different jobs involved.
- Before this, four creative workshops with Christina Nelson, artist/actor in the school. In one of the workshops, the scriptwriter for the *Snow Queen*, came into class and talked about the process of adapting the text, and gave the pupils privileged access to the script, which was before rehearsals had begun.
- Before this, lessons in class reading the story of the *Snow Queen* and watching one of the films.
- A visit to the Lyric Theatre to see the *Snow Queen*.
- Two workshops with Emer Maguire, Science Communicator, about the planets.
- A digital art workshop using Pro Create to produce images of the planets.
- A visit to the installation *Our Place in Space* at the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, including walking most of the 11km coastline to Crawfordsburn Park (along which the artworks were displayed).

- Before this, a session in class about the inspiration for the artwork, which was partly about giving a unifying perspective of people all belonging to the planet.
- Two writing workshops with Sheena Wilkinson, Author.
- A visit to the Seamus Heaney HomePlace in Bellaghy.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Clear structure.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, summarised that: "The way in which this year's programme has been designed has cleverly introduced them to little nuggets of new information, which all roll on to the next experience." For example: "The fact that the students had studied the script meant that they had the confidence to ask questions about the various stage effects and how the designer had achieved these." Christina Nelson, artist/actor, planned the creative workshops with the puppeteer at the Lyric Theatre who had not previously facilitated sessions with young people. In her November 2022 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, judged that: "Both Christina and Paul had planned the session at just at the right level with a wonderful mix of images and creative thinking." For example, the November visit to the Lyric started with warm up games, and a puppetry workshop (with the life size reindeer puppet from the Snow Queen) so pupils were ready to make the best of the theatre tour.

"Everyone was there and on time and the room was ready so we could all the time we had well." Christina Nelson, artist/actor

"How do you create quality in a participative project? By employing the top people in the industry!" Christina Nelson, artist/actor

- **Flexibility.** Sam Fitzpatrick, lead teacher, explains that: "Christina reads her audience so well; she has a bank of ideas she can improvise quickly; she can take control and encourage everyone to take part; she is on the ball with everyone, she is very confident, but also very real and down to earth, very approachable."
- **Self-directed learning.** In her March observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, noted that: "The students were engaged and relaxed, they were finding things out for themselves at their own pace and were perhaps more curious and willing to talk."

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** Scheduling the sessions was difficult because the lead teacher doesn't teach the class. She argued to be their form tutor, but this only gave a few minutes of

time each day. In addition, the artists were very busy. The original plan was to have six workshops with each of Emer and Sheena.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have four observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	14 th November 2022	21 st November 2022	1st March 2023	14th March 2023
Artform	Drama	Drama	Film making	Science/English and an Art installation walk
Year Group	Year 9	Year 9	Year 9	Key stage 3
Length of Session	2.5 hours	2 hours	Nearly 2 hours	Full day
Number of Students	20	20	10	20

The impacts on the pupils are:

- Confidence.** In her November observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reflected on the visit of Director Paul Boyd to say: "All of these experiences so carefully planned and put together are raising the spirits of these young people." She summed up that: "I have watched these students since last year and can see a difference in every one of them, they are much more confident even in the way that they carry themselves, and they are not afraid to speak." The November session continued this process of giving the pupils special access: "They were in the most magnificent space. They were the only group in the theatre that day. The stage manager gave them a full tour of the building, the rehearsal studios, and a full walk around backstage where they met and talked to the set designers. They learnt about the different sections of the theatre, the house and the stage. They got to walk on the stage in both theatres and also learnt about the terms such as upstage, centre stage, stage right etc. They saw the other areas too, including the green rooms, the dressing rooms and stepped into the wings., They sat out in the auditorium and were given a walk and talk around the smaller theatre space too. This really was a magical tour."

"The girls are known as the most engaged and confident class in the year. They ask a lot more questions. There are few problems in the group. They have a far better relationship within the class. They are capable of expressing themselves so any conflicts get resolved more quickly." Sam Fitzpatrick, lead teacher

- **Aspirations.** Marie's November observation emphasises: "The value of connecting the students with local places where they may not have under normal circumstances access to. To understand that in order to raise aspirations in young people we have to open their eyes to possibilities and show them a wider world."
- **Wellbeing.** In her November observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, described several elements that enhance the wellbeing of the students: contact with the artist, the relaxed learning environment and the collaborative learning: "Christina uses these techniques in a very relaxed way which creates a great feeling of unity and team spirit. Her consistent positive attitude is really uplifting." In her November observation, Marie noted that: "This was an active day where everyone's spirits were lifted just with the sheer enthusiasm and dynamism of the interactions."

"The project has helped me realise that I don't have to be judged for who I am. I can just be myself." Pupil interviewed

- **Communication.** The November session included tongue twisters: "Students were using their lips and teeth with the tip of the tongue while saying phrases such as Seven Superstitious Fishes and Unique New York and Irish Wrist Watch and Cheap Greek Sheep's Cheese. They had great fun experimenting with their voices in a new purposeful way as they listened and followed the actors singing these phrases to various scales."
- **Critical thinking.** In the puppetry workshop in the November visit, the puppeteer explained the challenges of creating and using the puppets, for example: "Christopher spoke of the importance of the costume designer and how they had to problem solve especially how to cope with the tremendous heat and weight of the costume. He shared the problem with the students and then showed how cleverly the designer had come up with a solution of creating a drinking bottle hidden within the costume and long plastic straw so that he could get cool water if he needed to during his performance."
- **Creativity.** In one of the exercises mentioned in the November observation: "began with someone in the circle passing an imaginary box to the person next to them but the person who received it as a box had to transform it and pass it on as something new e.g., a bunch of flowers."
- **Knowledge about theatre.** Sam Fitzpatrick, lead teacher, points out that in seeing how the designs for costumes developed, in feeling the weight of costumes, in knowing the short amount of time actors had to change into costumes, the girls learnt about the skill involved in theatre and other creative work.

"Christina introduced Paul Boyd and he spoke about how he had been commissioned to write a play and he had four months to transform Hans Christian Anderson's story into a musical for the Lyric Theatre. He was very engaging when he explained to them about the whole process from when he first heard that he had got the job right through to the writing of the script, the development of the characters and his working with the actors. He also spoke about his involvement with the team of set designers, costume designers, technicians and musicians... There was a lot of questioning and learning about the different elements of how a musical is created... A lot about career opportunities was discussed, as Christina said

there is something for everyone!” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, November observation

- **Interest in learning.** The pupils I interviewed said the project had made them more excited to be in school: “There is nothing in the project that hasn't been fun. It has made us happier and more comfortable. It encourages pupils to come to school because they look forward to the project.”

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Embedding of creative learning in KS3 pedagogy.** The school is part the way through the task of reviewing the KS3 schemes of work with the aim of increasing pupil engagement by using creative learning, a development that has gained practical inspiration from observing the Creative Schools Partnership projects. This year, the lead teacher applied a survey, PASS, to measure pupils’ attitude to learning and found that the class working with Creative Schools Partnership scored much far above what would be expected. This evidence has motivated the school to find a way for all KS3 classes to experience a Creative School Partnerships type project, probably a less intense version.

“We don't want only one class to increase their scores for pupil experience.” Louise Hanvey, Principal

- **Understanding of the wide application of creative learning.** During the pupil’s visit to the *Our Place in Space* art installation, students applied the skills they had developed using Photoshop to create their own digital solar systems. More widely across the school: the Head of Business Studies has changed her case studies of companies to ask the students to prepare podcasts. In Geography, one of the teachers is asking students to write a news report about their fieldtrips, including interviewing people, rather than a more standard report.

“In creative learning, students need to think about the key messages, the audience and how to present the information. They are learning the same information in a more engaging way.” Louise Hanvey, Principal

- **Profile of creative learning.** The school has introduced a news broadcast showing in the central atrium on a continual reel, and Creative Schools Partnership has featured several times.
- **Teacher development.** Sam Fitzpatrick, Lead Teacher, always learns new techniques from working with the artists. For example, Sheena used the structure of Moira Johnson’s poem *Home* to lead the pupils to write their own personal version. The puppetry workshop involved pupils making puppets out of newspaper, with three participants working closely together to animate the puppets.

“The Creative Schools Partnership project gives a much better experience than having pupils sitting in a classroom all day. It has been a total privilege to work on the projects. It is so obvious we should be working like this. It totally engages the children and opens up their mind to new experiences and they don't even know they are learning.” Sam Fitzpatrick, lead teacher

- **Interdepartmental working.** As with previous years, the project involved English and Science.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the local community are:

- **Community cohesion.** The pupils responded positively to the shared workshop with St Vincent's. I interviewed four of the girls and they described the pupils of St Vincent's as: “Very kind and supportive; active, with a lot of enthusiasm and good energy.”

“The project strengthened the bonds in the class. You get to work together with other pupils and share opinions. You can see you have more in common with the other people than you thought.” Pupils interviewed by the evaluator

Impacts on the artists

Christina Nelson, artist/actor, said that working with young people is always exciting because of the things they say that you might not have thought of, which encourages you to think outside the box.

“Sometimes you forget that it is OK not to be perfect all the time. As an industry person, remembering this helps to keep you grounded. It is also worthwhile because young people are the future of the industry and it is vital that they know the arts are accessible to them and that Drama contributes to all subjects.”

One way in which Creative Schools Partnership could support artists more is to bring them together so they could play and share experiences, to participate themselves.

In the future, Christina would like the pupils to create their own show and present it in the community.

School 6: St. Colm's High School

Previous projects

St Colm's High School has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Post code Belfast BT17 0BT

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	366	430	536	645
% of students who receive free school meals	72	72	72	68.8
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	359	363	307	330
Religion	99% Catholic; 1% Other /Unknown	99% Catholic, 1% Other /Unknown	99% Catholic, 1% Other /Unknown	97.1% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Production of an online cookbook	Ceramic Exterior Wall Mural/Development of Literature Through Poetry	Development of literacy through the arts with a focus on mental health	
Artists and partners	Dolan Heaney, chef Colin McGuiver, Sheena Kelly Wheel Works	Annmarie Robinson, ceramic artist Gina McDonald, Caoimhe McGrath, CNP	Aaron Dickson, Photographer Danni Carragher, Bounce Culture NI	Graham Ginty Patricia Meir
Timing	April to June 2018	March to June 2019	May to June 2021	to June 2023
Age of children	13-14	11-12	13-14	13-14
Number of children	10	100	22	20

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 6: Logic model for the project:

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (music – drumming – drama) Teacher CPD Showcase	Number of pupils (target 28 Yr 9)	Pupils develop their self-confidence and self-esteem, enhance their mental wellbeing and resilience, strengthen their	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities around improved levels of literacy, self-esteem and mental wellbeing

		literacy and raise their aspirations The school deepens interdepartmental working and strengthens community links (e.g., Urban Villages, Our Generation Project, Action Mental Health, Ionad na Faiseoige, Footprints Women's Centre, Colin Community Allotments, Bounce Culture)	
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Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: involving parents; continuing with an artform that previous participants loved – African drumming; and involving parents and grandparents in the creative workshops.

Process

Description

The **year one** project started in January and completed in June 2022. A full class of 28 Yr9 students took part in creative workshops in African drumming and the bodhran. The group were chosen because they are lower achievers academically. The previous project had worked with high achievers and the school wanted to explore the relevance of creative learning to different groups in school.

Ursula Mackel, lead teacher from the English Department, explains that the project built on the legacy of the previous Creative Schools Partnership work with an increasing focus on self-esteem and mental health and a progression from poetry to music and song lyrics. As she says: "We took what we learnt and we ran with it, so we are really delighted with the result."

The **year two** project continued with the same students, now Yr10s. The thinking behind the work was that the first year had helped students find their voice, and the second year would guide them in channelling their voices. Students created and were filmed performing monologues. The lead teacher explained that at this age, pupils start to realise that they will be moving onto GCSE years from September and are afraid they will fail. They care desperately about failing and some express their frustration or fear through disruptive behaviour in class.

Project activity consisted of:

- Drama workshops with Patricia Meyer.
- Filming (for four pupils) with Graham Ginty.

The school felt supported throughout the programme. Adrian Walsh, Principal, said that: “Marie is absolutely superb. We couldn't have done the project without her.”

The school already has a strong commitment to creative learning, consistent with the Magenta Principles.

The Principal, Adrian Walsh, said that this year, as for previous years, Creative Schools Partnership contributes to all the objectives of the School Development Plan (Foster high self-esteem, raise standards of literacy, numeracy and ICT, Enable pupils to their full potential, and Improve attendance and punctuality).

“Creative Schools Partnership has allowed us to listen to the pupil voice, and this is something we need to do more of.” Adrian Walsh, Principal

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Clear structure.** In her observation of the Drama session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reported that: “The session was well structured: first they had some ice breaking exercises; then the young people were given an example of Forum theatre, its function and its purpose; they then worked in groups, taking an issue with the rest of the group intercepting to change the action or to change the outcome.” The structure was designed to ensure progression.

“Time was short - 1 hour. A lot was achieved in this space of time, the students did not waste one minute!” Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observation of mask-making session

“Initially students were watching and following, but quite soon into the sessions Thomas handed over responsibility to them. He incorporated a lot of game-like approaches where he got them to beat the drum individually creating their own rhythms which their peers had to copy. There were memory games too where they had to beat a rhythm and then call out the names of the students in the room.” Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observation of drumming session

- **Appropriate space.** In her observation of the Drama session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reflected that: “It was very freeing for students to be in a more open space as opposed to the classroom.”
- **Flexibility.** In her observation of the Drama session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observed that the actor changed the framing of the discussion of bullying once the teacher explained possibly triggering subjects around family bullying.

- **Self-directed learning.** The students chose the subject for discussion in the Drama session, which included: bullying, peer pressure, influencers, and the impact of technology, family problems, community influences and paramilitaries. The children talked about how they masked their fear of failing, which the artist picked up on and developed into as an exercise making masks with words on the inside.

“The beauty of Creative Schools Partnership is that we can deviate from a prescribed outcome. The project evolved out of ideas from the students, so they had ownership of it.”
Ursula Mackel, lead teacher

- **Strong engagement.** Ursula Mackel, lead teacher, observed many examples where students went beyond what would usually be expected of them. For example, they stayed behind to help with clearing up the classroom, they attended in the summer even after exams.

“The artists and arts professionals who come into the school have an amazing positivity. They work with the pupils in a completely non-judgemental way and the pupils have been very vocal with their appreciation. Engagement from pupils has been remarkable.” Adrian Walsh, Principal

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** Writing the monologues with the young people took more time than expected, which delayed the filming. Squeezing filming into the last two weeks of the project meant fewer pupils were around as exams had finished.
- **Attendance.** As with other schools, attendance is lower than before the pandemic, although attendance was higher for this project and all pupils stayed until the end.

Impacts

Impacts on students

The Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, observed four sessions:

Date	April 2023	April 2023	April 2023	June 2023
Artform	Drama	Drama and mask making	Drumming	Drama / Film/ Music / Art
Year Group	Key stage 3	Key stage 3	Key stage 3	Year 10
Length of Session	1 hour	1 hour	1 hour	Half day
Number of Students	20	20	20	19

The impacts on the pupils are:

- **Confidence.** Ursula Mackel, Lead Teacher, explained that at the beginning, the students weren't confident enough to make a telephone call, to talk to other people, and they said they didn't want to be in front of the camera. By the end, they were filmed presenting their monologues. Ursula said that the project developed pupils' confidence because, once they had developed a relationship of trust with the artist, they were led to work outside their comfort zones, and this changed their views about their abilities. The school will launch the film in September, and give the participants awards for their achievements.
- **Communication skills.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue noted that the monologue writing session improved pupils' literacy.

"From the outset students were encouraged to write freely and openly. That began with words then graduated into individual statements and then progressed to a joined-up piece of writing. They were encouraged to write their thoughts as a stream of consciousness and to not get hung up on grammatical construction. The students found this very liberating, and the teacher said they wrote far more than would usually be the case in class." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, June observation of monologue writing

- **Critical thinking.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue reflected that coming up with new possibilities, as required in the Forum Theatre format, requires relatively sophisticated thinking: "The students were discussing and sharing their ideas. They were then able to rewind the action and step in and replay the scene using the same stimulus, but by thinking creatively were able to create solutions to avoid the previous clash between the characters. When the students then improvised the different behaviour, they could see the consequences were very different... The nature of the drama was giving them time to stop and think and process rather than react."

"The pupils were managing their own learning and one student in particular fed back to the actor that he would never ever have given himself time to think like this." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, June observation of monologue writing

- **Teambuilding.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, explained how the mask-making process required a level of intimacy and trust between pupils: "The pupils were working in pairs with Modroc, so it meant that one had to sit while the other student reassured them and prepared their face for the covering. They had to be firm, confident, and clearly follow the instructions that they had been given, to cover the face in Vaseline to protect the skin and to cut the Modroc in small strips and wet them to apply to the face. They had to work quickly to layer the material on the face and to carefully dampen and smooth the material so that it moulded neatly to the face so that the holes in the material disappeared. They carefully had to lift the mould from the face when it was semi dry but still flexible enough to remove. There was a lot of communication between the pairs as they worked and a lot of reassurance as one partner worked on the other's face."

“There was great hilarity as they worked on each other’s faces and helped one another to achieve the best result.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, observation of mask-making session

- **Wellbeing.** Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reflected that the drumming session required strong hand, brain, eye and ear coordination. “This created an immersive and meditative experience for the students. It was as if they were chanting with the drums.” Marie talked to students after the drumming workshop: “Many of the students particularly the males spoke of their enjoyment when playing, they like the sound, the loudness of them and the physical feeling of beating the drum. They said that they left the class in a much better mood.” Wellbeing was also supported in the drama workshops, where students talked about their fears and were asked to consider if there were any positives arising from the negatives.

“Pupils seemed to gain a sense of release in starting to think and address in a positive way some of their fears and blockages in their lives. The actor was very skilled in not allowing them to dwell too long on the negative but encouraging them to be resilient and to think of strategies to address their issues.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, June observation of monologue writing

- **Engagement in learning.** Adrian Walsh, Principal, explains that the school has software and strategies, diagnostics and support structures for students who need help, for example, with GCSE Maths. What it needs is for the pupils to be open to this support and that is what Creative Schools Partnership delivers. He was impressed with the honesty and emotional intelligence with which pupils articulated their fears about learning. Moreover, once pupils have been successful in the project, teachers can use this as a reference point to motivate individual commitment in other contexts.

“I’m xx. My dream is to be a personal trainer. I got diagnosed with this heart condition. This makes it hard for me to do that but I will not let it stop me from doing what I want to do. I will work hard and not let this get in my way. When I dance, I forget everything else. It takes focus and concentration. When I dance, I feel free. Like nothing in this world can stop me. I want to continue to feel that in my life.” Text from one of the monologues.

“The personal interactions between the actor and the students allowed a period of self-reflection and gave the students the chance to answer their own questions. One student said: “I am a messer at school and I just now do it because that is what I think my friends expect. I get into trouble for it, but I think I am running with the wrong crowd.....I think that I am just going to have to stand up for myself.”” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, June observation of monologue writing

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Equipment.** Last year, the school bought 30 drums, use of which has been integrated into the Music curriculum at KS3.
- **Raised profile.** The students were the opening act for the local part of The Swingles international tour, with a performance at St. Columb's Hall Derry/Londonderry at 7:30pm.
- **Display.** The poetry anthology from the previous Creative School Partnership project is still very visible in the school: all 50 pages are displayed around the school, with ten in the foyer.
- **Teacher development.** Ursula Mackel, lead teacher, said that she was impressed with the way monologues guided students to being more fluent with language and opening up about their vulnerabilities, and would use the technique in her English lessons. Ursula also felt that schools were generally more open to project-based learning as they seek to engage students after the pandemic.

“Project-based learning had lost its way as teachers felt under pressure from looming examples, but interest is growing: there needs to be a renewed focus on using the skills-based curriculum to its full potential. Creative Schools Partnership should be built into the curriculum because it is an absolutely fantastic programme.” Ursula Mackel, lead teacher

- **Creative learning.** Ursula Mackel, lead teacher, reported back on the progress of Creative Schools Partnership at three inset days. All teachers were asked to reflect on how to use creative learning in their lessons and everyone has done something. For example, History has made models of historical events.

Impacts on the local community

The school was hoping to work with Ionad na Faiseoige, a local Irish language arts centre, but finding a convenient time for both was not possible.

The Creative Schools Partnership participants, plus another 25 students, attended a two-day workshop with Our Generation, exploring and breaking down stereotypes around the experience of homelessness.

Impacts on the artists

Graham Ginty, film and music artist, said the project supported his creative development because the film was more creative and abstract, not just narrative or descriptive. He also benefits from discovering apps that he can teach to other clients.

He thinks that one of the general lessons for Creative Schools Partnership is that projects with multiple artists should have a joint planning session early in the process, and without the pupils in the room, to ensure there is one cohesive vision.

School 7: Lisneal College

Previous projects

Lisneal College joined Creative Schools Partnership in year 2.

	Yr 3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	894	1120
% of students who receive free school meals	40	37.7
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	315	195 (stage 1-3)
Religion	81% Protestant, 4% Catholic, 15% Other / Unknown	76.5% Protestant, 6.4% Catholic, 17.1% Other / Unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Inter-generational Stories	Our world in drama
Artists and partners	Jonathan Burgess, director	Jonathan Burgess, scriptwriter Andrew Tinney, director Laura Douglas, director
Timing	December 2020- June 2021	
Age of children	11-14	KS3
Number of children	16	38

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 7: LOgic model for the project: Our world in drama

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops	Number of pupils (target: 40-60 KS3)	Pupils develop empathy, strengthen their Drama skills, and increase their understanding of the theatre	Contribution to the School Development Plan.
Scripts	Number of plays created (target: 4)	The school develops teachers' skills and confidence in Drama, and strengthens community links (e.g.,	
Plays			
Theatre visits			
Teaching CPD (directing, production)			

		with Urban Villages, North West Cultural Partnership, The Millennium Forum Youth Theatre	
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Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: creating plays on social/community issues chosen by the students as relevant to them; and students – and teachers - working with a professional theatre practitioner.

Process

Description

Michelle Lake, Drama teacher, decided to continue the success of the previous year's project by focusing on building the Drama Department. Before her appointment, the school had not offered GCSE Drama, only KS3 taught by non-specialists.

The **year one** project consisted of two devised plays: on intergenerational issues and intercultural issues. These subjects were chosen by the young people themselves, in conversation with Michelle Lake. Michelle put out a general call for interest to KS3 and 30 pupils replied. 20 were selected to take part in the class. Most were academic achievers.

The project consisted of 30 Drama workshops, four production workshops and two shows: in a Drama room in the school and at The Fountain Primary School.

The **year two** project consisted of:

- Four sessions with Jonathan Burgess developing the ideas and text for the plays. Jonathan also attended more than half of the rehearsal sessions.
- Ten rehearsal sessions with Andrew Tinney directing the play on drugs.
- Ten rehearsal sessions with Laura Douglas directing the play about bonfires.
- Two performances of both plays in May 2023, one in the school with around 250 people in the audience; and one in the community at the Irish Street Community Centre with around 40 audience members.

38 students took part in the project from across KS3.

The project contributes to the school's mission to encourage students and their families, especially Protestant Working Class families, to value the arts and be more aware of the job opportunities they offer.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Structure.** Both directors had a systematic approach to rehearsals which worked up from developing characters and individual scenes towards a full run through. Andrew Tinney chose to have the full cast on stage all the time so that pupils learnt how to be present in the performance throughout the 20 minutes of the show.

“I wanted to teach the students that acting is reacting, reacting to the other actors and the audience. There is a tendency for young people to walk on stage and then spring to life. I wanted them to be live throughout the show. I kept saying: “remember you can be seen all the time. If you are walking on the stage, you have to be live before the audience can see you”. Having all students on the stage all the time reminded them of this.” Andrew Tinney, director

- **Self-directed learning.** In her observation of the April 2023 session, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, commented that: “I have definitely noticed a difference in how the students are leading more of their own learning, the artist and the teacher in this session were very much taking a back step, giving the young people a chance to organise themselves and to take responsibility for their own learning with the professionals on hand for advice.”

“As I watched, I could see their performance becoming sharper and their confidence growing as they began to make their own corrections without having to be prompted.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, April 2023 observation

- **Engagement.** In her observation of the April 2023 session, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reflected that: “The fact too that pupils are working towards a final performance has kept them focused and encouraged them to bond as a team.” Michelle Lake, lead teacher, mentioned two families were thinking of taking their children out of the school, who changed their minds when the two joined the Creative Schools Partnership project.

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** The project could not be scheduled for the same day each time because this would have impinged on one particular subject. The arts professionals were also very busy this year, so planning took more time. Although Creative Schools Partnership did not ask for an application this year as it was framed as a two year project, the funding was only confirmed in November, which delayed the start as artists worked through their existing commitments. Factors such as the action short of strike and difficulty transporting the children home meant the performances had to be during the day rather than in the evening.
- **Space.** The groups rehearsed in the Drama room, when it was free, the assembly hall and PE halls. The PE Department has been strongly supportive of the project.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have two observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	April 2023	25 April 2023
Artform	Drama	Drama
Year Group	Year 8, 9, 10	Year 8, 9, 10
Length of Session	Afternoon session	All day
Number of Students	20	20

The impacts on the pupils are:

- Teamworking.** In her observation of the April 2023 session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, noted that: "This group were really working as a team, listening to each other, respecting each other's opinions and pulling together for the common good. They were able to take the constructive criticism and use it to improve their performance."
- Literacy skills.** In her observation of the April 2023 session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, thought that: "Their literacy skills are being developed and they are engaging more because they have been asked to work on a topic that they are passionate about and want to explore. The curriculum often does not allow for time to be given to current issues that are worrying the students." Michelle Lake, Lead Teacher, estimates that the pupils who have been through Creative Schools Partnership projects are one level above other pupils for English, and two levels above for Drama.
- Communication skills.** In her observation of the April 2023 session, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, recorded that: "The structure of the activity focused very much on the development of communication skills from learning how to use their voices on stage to learning how to use their body to express moods, to create tension and to emphasise characterisation. They spoke well but some of them were learning how to project their voices to ensure they could be heard."
- Confidence.** The Principal, Michael Allen, commented that the results-driven in education, especially in Northern Ireland, with academic selection, can mean that students arrive at the school feeling that they are failures. He believes that offering creative subjects is essential because it gives students different ways to succeed and different ways to learn, when many arrive assuming that direct instructions has failed or failed them.

"All of the students were thinking more about how they were using their bodies and their voices to reflect and symbolise the different characters. Students playing drug dealers who had to rethink their character and become much more confident and aggressive. You could see them becoming much more confident and independent as they started to take risks and

lose themselves in the whole interaction on stage.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, April observation

“The students are very aware they are dealing with arts professionals. When they talk to the artists, they up their game and use technical theatre language. That confidence and fluency they then bring into Drama classes.” Michelle Lake, lead teacher

“The process was broadly the same that I would use with professional actors, and I let the pupils know that I was treating them as theatre professionals.” Laura Douglas, director

- **Wellbeing.** The play does reference the risks of drugs, although in a complex context where, for example, the children’s parents are taking drugs.

“I’ll always remember how sad and alone she looked as she walked away from us that day. The drugs did that. Oh yeah, everybody thinks about the physical stuff, but the drugs impact your life in so many other ways. They make you a different person, a different child to your parents, a stranger to your friends. (pause) That was the last time any of us saw Jacqui. Walking away from us that day. (long pause as she composes herself) She was hit by a car on the dual carriageway that night. She’d taken something and was out walking. All round the Waterside. Somebody had seen her staggering down the middle of the Limavady Road and called the police, but they didn’t find her before she was hit on the Link Road. When they tested her, she was full of drugs. Probably never saw it coming. But that’s not much of a positive at fourteen years old. (pause) You always hear about ‘some fella’ or ‘some girl’ and you think ‘what state must their life have been in for that to happen to them?’ But I can tell you because I saw it. It doesn’t take much to get you there.” Last scene in the drugs play, *Hi*, by Jonathan Burgess

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Increased status of Drama teaching.** Before Creative Schools Partnership, the school didn’t have a Drama teacher. Last year, the school appointed a Head of Drama and in September a second joined. A third member of staff will join the Drama Department in September 2023. The school took the decision to make Drama compulsory at KS3. All classes have two lessons a week, separate from English. The school now has two GCSE Drama classes and will be offering A and AS level Drama for the first time. Michelle Lake, lead teacher, says that the positive effect of Creative Schools Partnership has meant that she was able to introduce an A level class sooner than she had expected and attracted a higher calibre of student. The A level class will have 16 students, 10 of whom came from the GCSE class and five from other schools. The Principal, Michael Allen, thinks that the school productions have improved in quality each year since the start of Creative Schools Partnership. Where before two or three students with strong acting skills would carry the show, now shows have large casts, including boys, with strong acting skills as evidenced by their non-verbal communication and delivery. The show this year also had

a more compelling script, which had been written based on students' experiences. There is a positive cycle of high-quality shows increasing interest in taking Drama. Michael believes Drama raises aspiration because it allows students to see themselves in higher end careers like law and teaching.

"Last year the Christmas Show had 19 pupils involved and that has jumped to 52 for this year. The Christmas Show auditioning process has become so competitive! The Creative Schools Partnership group are moving onto the Christmas show and bringing the other children with them." Michelle Lake, lead teacher

- **Teacher development.** Michelle Lake, lead teacher, learnt from watching Andrew employing physical theatre. Schools tend to concentrate on naturalistic theatre and being more adventurous broadens pupils' skills and appreciation as performers and audience members.
- **Creative learning.** The Principal, Michael Allen, comments that: "There is a sense in which every teacher has to be a performer, so they can engage or dupe pupils into learning without knowing it. The best teachers have a sense of doing things differently, a sense of mystery." Creative Schools Partnership has given a model and a process for teachers to see the performative nature of teaching – and learning. The school has changed from an assessment system of quarterly tracking of learning a year to having two measurements of learning and two of skills development including creativity. Michelle Lake, lead teacher, said that the manifest increase in quality of the Christmas shows has motivated teachers to become involved. Michelle received multiple offers of help with this year's show. There is a clear understanding in the school that Drama is valuable for all students, not a back up subject for the non-academic pupils.

"I am so pleased we went down the route of using Drama as a route into the creative industries. It has been exactly what we wanted. Across the school, the shows have raised teachers' expectations of what pupils are capable of. It has also given teachers confidence to try new things." The Principal, Michael Allen

- **Stronger links with the community.** Through working with the artists and partners in Creative Schools Partnership, the school has connected with Millennium Forum, the Young Drama Council, as well as local musicians, bands and freelance artists. This year eight pupils are performing in local community performances at the Millennium Forum, where in the past this might have one or two.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the community are:

- **More positive identity.** The Principal, Michael Allen, suggests that being a Protestant group in a predominantly Catholic city means that people can feel isolated and unconfident. Creative Schools Partnership has helped develop a more positive identity by giving role models and broadening pupils' experiences outside school. The

Programme also gives a sense of commonality with the other schools participating, a feeling of being part of a movement that is changing local areas.

“There is such a negative public image of Protestant culture in Northern Ireland and the children are aware of it. They really gained from showing their culture around bonfires in a more positive light. We also received appreciation from community groups who came to the shows and liked the inclusive narrative.” Michelle Lake, lead Teacher

“Lisneal has done incredibly well this year. I think the bonfire performance should be shown everywhere. It deals with more themes than the pupils realised: immigration, refugees, polarisation within the Protestant community, acceptance, tolerance and all from a teenage perspective. It was a very interesting piece on Good Relations. Also, the school invited Bogside and Brandywell Health Forum into the school for the show which is a big deal, very much across the barricades.” Maureen Fox Urban Villages Co-ordinator

- **Celebration.** Urban Villages nominated the lead teacher, Michelle Lake, to go to a Buckingham Palace Garden Party.
- **Resource.** Michelle would like to translate the play into a film, so that the pupils can learnt about the process, and so other schools and youth clubs can use the films for their pastoral support.

Impacts on the artists

Andrew Tinney, director, said the project developed his skills because the pupils were younger than those with whom he would usually work. The next logical step for the school would be for a play to be performed in a theatre since this heightens the experience.

Laura Douglas, director, said the project developed her skills because she is used to working with children already committed to going into the arts. In the first workshop, five pupils were really keen to act and the rest said they would do one line but no more. By the end of the workshop, all pupils chose to audition for a part, which gave Laura a sense of achievement.

Jonathan Burgess, scriptwriter, appreciates working on Creative Schools Partnership because he still sees an undervaluing of theatre and the arts in the Protestant community and believes that schools like Lisneal are central to the goal of addressing misunderstandings about the sector.

School 8: Mercy College

Previous projects

Mercy College missed years 2 and 3 of Creative Schools Partnership.

Post code Belfast BT14 7QR

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	450	556	810
% of students who receive free school meals	70	68	68.8
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	222	263	276 (stage 1-3)
Religion	98% Catholic	94% Catholic, 3% Protestant	94.9% Catholic, .9% Protestant, 4.2% Other / Unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	D'Ya get me - using drama to explore issues affecting traumatised communities past and present, watching and creating drama	Putting on a Face – using drama, poetry, music and visual art to explore identity and mental and physical wellbeing.	Mercy Moments: commemoration of Mercy College's anniversary; exploration of pupils' and families' experiences of the pandemic.
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	Patricia Meir, retired Drama teacher Maebh Meir, visual artist Fleur Mellor, dancer, Duncairn Centre, Theatre trip to the Grand Opera House, career trip to the Lyric Theatre	Karen Kingham, film-maker
Timing	March to May 2018	March to June 2019	
Age of children	14	11-12	12-13
Number of children	20	18	22

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 8: LLogic model for the project: Mercy Moments

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (writing, drama, media)	Number of pupils (target: 24 Yr 8)	Pupils increase their confidence, enhance	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities of raising

Showcase or film		their wellbeing and raise their aspiration	attainment at GCSE 5+ A*-C
Teacher CPD (film-making)		The school strengthens links between departments and develops community links (e.g., Nerve Centre, Urban Villages)	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities to support mental health and wellbeing
Visits e.g., to Ulster Museum, Cultra			

Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: researching the history and impact of Mercy College in interviews in order to strengthen identity and belonging; connecting learning to life; involving parents and grandparents; a student-centred experience where students decide on the themes to explore; and employing KS4 and 5 students as mentors for the participants.

Process

Description

The lead teacher, Andrea Fryers, is an English Drama teacher. She wanted to expand into media and film-making this year because the school does not teach media, and she wanted to nurture her own skills in the subject. Film-making also suited the limitations of the school, which is squeezed for space (the stage is being used for storage) and lacks film-making equipment; and reduced the risks of disruption in the case of another lockdown. Making a DVD about the history of the school compensated for the limitations on celebrating the 60th anniversary of the school, which happened two years ago, during the pandemic.

The **year one** project consisted of:

- Workshops with Karen Kingham, film-maker.
- A visit to the Ulster Museum.

24 students took part. The same class took part in the **year two** project, with 22 participants.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Planning meetings.
- Drama, filming and editing workshops with the artist, Karen Kingham.

The original plan was for pupils to each produce a short film about their experience of COVID and research about impacts in their family and community. The lead teacher, Andrea Fryers, decided having one longer film would have greater impact – with a more cohesive and

complex narrative - and would better nurture pupils' skills in collaboration, so this is what the group did. This format worked well because it allowed the pupils to create a film that had serious and funny elements interweaved, different formats including poetry, with two main characters, a granny and a priest, providing an ongoing story.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Strong and collaborative structure.** In her May 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, said that: "The artists and teacher have worked closely together to co-create a comprehensive pathway which has encompassed all aspects of film making. By the end of the two years the students will have completed two films, one a documentary and the other a more self-expressive observation of life during lock down."

"There is a great balance between Karen, the film maker, and Andrea the lead teacher. Together they experiment, lead, and respect each other's views and learn from each other. Their commitment to always go the extra mile and their sheer enthusiasm has benefited these students." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, June observation

- **Continuity in facilitation.** Elaborating on the preconditions for the structure, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, said: "I think that this has been a good approach as the students have had the continuity of working with one artist who has listened and tailored everything to the needs of the students."
- **Careful choice of artform.** In her May 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, said that there is a wider lesson for the arts education about: "choosing the most appropriate artistic discipline that suits the needs of the students that you are working with. Film and drama together are the perfect combination to challenge students and for them all to find a place where they fit." Artist, Karen Kinghan, explains that improvisation suited the pupils perfectly because tend to be self-conscious and stilted when reading a script and more natural and animated when using their own words.

"When they are not reading a script, the pupils come alive." Artist, Karen Kinghan

- **Careful choice of artist.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, suggested an artist she knew would work well with the teacher because of similarities in personality and approach.

"Andrea and I work in a very intuitive way. We can be in the same room and give each other a look and we both understand what we mean. This level of communication has meant that I could involve Andrea in delivering the creative workshops, which means activity can continue when I am not there." Artist, Karen Kinghan

- **Sustained engagement.** The length of the project means that pupils can take on different roles, can gain confidence to try new things they might not have considered at the beginning. Several young people said that they achieved more than they thought would be possible last year and this has raised their expectations of what is possible.
- **Self-directed learning.** The pupils had a leading role in each stage of the project, including being involved in the editing of the film.

“When you treat the pupils as semi-professionals and give them a lot of positive feedback, they rise to the occasion. It sets a high standard. For example, they know silence is key during filming. They are respectful of the process. It is the pupils themselves who are ensuring the quality of the Creative Schools Partnership project. It is not “us” and “them” we are working sympatico to ensure quality.” Artist, Karen Kinghan

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **The pandemic.** COVID still has an effect on the mental health of pupils, teachers and support staff, and has affected pupil attendance and staff retention.
- **Funding.** 75% of the funding for Shared Education has been cut. Extended School was also cut, although a replacement is being discussed. The school has worked hard to remove the school’s historical deficit, but current cuts make this difficult to sustain.
- **Space and equipment.** In one session, the only space available was the assembly hall, and then the projector wouldn't connect to the artist’s computer. The length of the Creative Schools Partnership project meant there was time to allow for these little obstacles.
- **Timetabling.** As Andrea Fryers, lead teacher, emphasises: “All schools have challenges with timetabling, especially taking pupils off timetable. Our school is very accommodating, but it would be better if Creative Schools Partnership were given time within the timetable. That would take the pressure off teachers and pupils.”

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have three observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue.

Date	May 2023	May 2023	June 2023
Artform	Drama/filmmaking	Drama, film making	Drama
Year Group	Year 9	Year 9	Year 9
Length of Session	1 hour	Half day	2.5 hours
Number of Students	24	20	6

The impacts on the pupils are:

- **Communication.** In her second May observation, Marie reported that: “The technical communication skills between the students when working with all the filming equipment was of a near professional standard.”
- **Wellbeing.** The project was deliberately designed to help pupils process their experiences of the pandemic. In her May 2023 observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue reflected that: “The students were given the opportunity to address the trauma that they had experienced during lockdown and their lives at home. It was a clever session it allowed them to talk and to share their experiences. It was interesting to experience their perception of trauma and the way in which they were able to see the humour in it.”

“The project was almost like therapy. There is a mental health tidal wave from COVID. We do have agencies coming in offering support, but we need to be creative. What better way of helping the children than letting them talk and be open? This proved to be an ideal way to tackle mental health issues.” Andrea Fryers, lead teacher

- **Team work.** Artist, Karen Kinghan, observed that pupils would naturally take turns, seeing that they had had some time using a piece of equipment and someone else should have a turn.

“The students were learning how to work together as a team. They were conscious of their specific roles and respected each other as they carried out their responsibilities... every time I am in the school, I can see how they all pull together always showing kindness and consideration for each other.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, June observation

- **Engagement in learning.** Pupils learnt perseverance and attention. As Andrea Fryers, lead teacher, explained, they came to understand that it could take two hours for one take, and if they were going to get the quality they wanted, they needed to stay focused and quiet. This they achieved, as Andrea notes: “you could hear a pin drop”. One student who is quite shy because of anxiety came into the session with his arm in a sling and was still desperate to take part in the filming, using his other arm! Another student who is dyslexic had difficulty with text at the beginning of the project, but was very successful in the acting and developed her recall because of her strong interest in the process. A third student who had poor attendance stayed a full day off timetable to continue with the filming. All five of the students who have particularly problems with attendance definitely improved because of Creative Schools Partnership. Andrea mentioned that about half of the group came into class outside the Creative Schools Partnership sessions because they wanted to practice their stories or camera work. It is possible that last year’s project also encouraged resilience and engagement in learning since the film told the story of how the school survived threats and challenges, and also how the local communities came together at points.

“Pupils were very sharp, they had 2.5 hours to complete their filming. They were very focused and resilient, replaying and repeating action until they were satisfied with the film captured. The students were incredible in their perseverance.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, June observation

- **Drama.** No one in the group got below 88% in the Drama assessment. This is far above the grades for the rest of the year, where only 4-5% of students would get 90%+. There were 18 students in the GSCE drama class, 14 of whom had been in the earlier Creative Schools Partnership project. Four students are currently scheduled to study A level Drama (going to Girl’s Model), all four from the Creative Schools Partnership project.

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Cross departmental collaboration.** The project involved English, Drama, History and Art. One Art class had students writing and drawing their feelings about the pandemic, which produced inspiration for the film. A History teacher was involved last year and attended some of the workshops this year as well, out of interest.
- **Skill development.** Martin Moreland, Principal, suggested that Creative Schools Partnership takes away the pressure of teachers increasing their use of media and other creativity because even if they don't have the skills, especially the technical skills, they can see it can be enjoyable to learn with the children. Both teachers and pupils are empowered by this relaxed approach. Confirming this, Andrea Fryers, lead teacher, said that she has now integrated filmmaking into KS3. As departmental head she has set out that one of the units for each group will be assessed via a film. Students will improvise a scene around a drama theme as usual, but will then film and edit the performance. In addition, filming will be used during sessions to encourage pupils to look dispassionately at what they have done and consider possible improvements.

“There is strong evidence that if children have control over learning, and are guided in the right way, the whole process becomes easier. If we break down some of the formal barriers, if we are more light hearted, students see a different side to their teachers and there are fewer behavioural issues.” Martin Moreland, Principal

“I have always liked to have a relaxed atmosphere in class. I like to hear pupils talking and helping each other. Learning from their own mistakes. Creative Schools Partnership is teaching other departments that this style of teaching can be successful. It is what schools need going forward to counter the isolation of pupils who had no social contact during COVID or are always on their phones.” Andrea Fryers, lead teacher

- **Good Relations.** Creative Schools Partnership has strengthened the school’s connection with Boys Model. The two are considering ways to present a shared history of the schools, building on, but also widening, the commemorative film that Mercy made last year through Creative Schools Partnership.

- **Creative learning.** Andrea Fryers, lead teacher, gave a presentation about Creative Schools Partnership at a teacher inset day and numerous teachers emailed her to express interest in the approach. They particularly commented on how the pupils had matured through the project.
- **Teacher morale.** Sometimes after the workshops, Andrea and Karen were giggling for half an hour after the session, because the characterisation of the pupils was so witty. As Andrea emphasises: “It is such a pleasure to be part of Creative Schools Partnership. I had some of my best moments this year on the project, and that is important when teachers are under pressure at school and criticised for striking in the news out of school.”

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the community are:

- **Record of experiences during COVID.** As Marie explained in her June observation: “This particular drama is a direct reflection of what happened in their community during covid. The students have carried out their research and worked together on developing their own interpretations of a reflection of what they observed.”
- **Celebration of young people.** The school is planning a red carpet premier for the film in September, which will bring together pupils, parents, teachers and community representatives and groups.

Impacts on the artists

Artist, Karen Kinghan, developed her skills from working closely with the teacher. For example, she was reminded of the importance of recapping what was learnt previously at the beginning of each session.

“The children have such interesting backgrounds. It always opens your mind. Any artist would be inspired going into this school.” Artist, Karen Kinghan

One way in which Creative Schools Partnership could support Karen more would be to have more chances to connect with other artists on the programme.

School 9: Belfast Model For Boys

Previous projects

Belfast Model for Boys joined Creative Schools Partnership after the pilot.

	Yr 1	Yr 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	1047	1093	1104
% of students who receive free school meals	60	59	53.6
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	483	410	481 (stage 1-3)
Religion	90% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 9% Other	86% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 13% Other / Unknown	83.5% Protestant, .9% Catholic, 15.6% Other / Unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Postcards from Cavehill – photographic exhibitions	New Opportunities – media technologies CPD	Heroes in our community/Aspirational portraits
Artists and partners	Melvyn Smith, Community Engagement Manager, Belfast Exposed Grainne McKenna, The Learning Curve	Nerve Belfast	Nerve Belfast Mark Devenport, broadcaster
Timing	April to June 2019	June 2021	
Age of children	13-14 and 16-17	13-14	KS3
Number of children	30	9	13

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 9: LOGic model for the project: heroes in our community

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (researching, interviewing, photographing, documenting and communicating) Magazine (with features on mental health and societal/local issues) Podcasts	Number of pupils (target: 20 KS3)	Pupils develop creativity, critical thinking, problem-solving, analytical and creative learning skills (in Photoshop, InDesign, script-writing, presenting and photography), and wellbeing (including	Contribution to School Development Plan priority to ensure quality outcomes for learners

Blog Teacher CPD and sharing		knowledge of mental health subjects) The school develops teachers' skills, strengthens creative learning, and enhances connections to the community (e.g., Nerve Belfast, Urban Villages, Greater Shankill Partnership, Shankill Mirror)	
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Assumptions:

That impact is strengthened by: giving students specific 'industry' roles in small groups; giving students life experiences that generate new thinking; connecting learning to the community/real world; working with Nerve Belfast, with whom the school already has a strong relationship; working with prestigious artists who act as role models; having a theme and values around aspiration; and having students learn and then communicate their learning.

Process

Description

The **year one** project activity consisted of:

- Planning meetings including talking to the artists and printers to create a structure and timetable for the project.
- Six workshops with Mark Devenport, a journalist for the BBC, on interviewing skills and story writing.
- Six workshops with Nerve Belfast on Photoshop and InDesign. The two sessions were virtual before the lockdown relaxed.
- A workshop with Glenn Molloy on Street Art.
- Weekly classroom time to write articles and design the pages.
- Three meetings with Joan Totten of Alternatives Community Group to discuss the history of the area and plan interviews with local residents.
- Attendance at the Waterways Festival Creative Writing Competition.

26 students, one class, took part.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Two days of joint planning sessions with the artists.

- Time pupils spent interviewing members of their family and people in the community. Overall, ten people from the community were interviewed, usually by pupils working in groups.
- Seven days of workshops with Nerve Belfast.
- Seven days of workshops with Mark Devenport, broadcaster.
- Seven days of workshops with Conor McGinley, mural artist.
- Two days of teacher CPD with Nerve Belfast.

Over the last year, the school restructured the classes. Rather than going with one class again, the teachers decided to select pupils who were particularly interested in the arts. The group started with 18 participants, five of whom dropped out after the first session. Seven had taken part in the project last year.

The teachers emphasised that: “A major strength of the programme has to be the role of Marie. She is always there with anything we need and turns up in person to see how we are getting on.”

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Preparation.** In her June observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reported that: “Conor, the artist was extremely well prepared, he had come the previous week and had power hosed the wall and primed it over the weekend in preparation for the students.”
- **Pupil engagement.** Mark Devenport, broadcaster, explained that having a slow “burn/continuous process” allowed him to work on many levels: he taught interviewing skills, including role playing an interview that was unproductive because of the kind of (closed) questions as well as emphasising the omnipresence and relevance of interviewing for example, in job recruitment; he talked about his experience in broadcasting to encourage the students to be curious about the process behind the media they consume and to raise their awareness of career pathways; he told stories about the people he had met to illustrate compelling narrative, as well to interest and amuse the pupils; he asked about the pupils’ family stories so he could identify material for the magazine and also to identify resources or strengths they might have that should help their future (e.g., one pupil spoke four languages); he talked about the importance of using first hand sources to ensure the information is accurate; he gave individual feedback to participants to make their text or its presentation more compelling. Sarah Lawrence, from the Nerve Centre, points out that the interviewing sessions were a great way of getting to know the boys and showing the teachers and artists were interested in them as individuals. Both artists commented that the pupils seemed genuinely interested in hearing the stories of family members and people in their community, which motivated them to persist with the writing techniques.

- **Seamless delivery.** Sarah Lawrence from the Nerve Centre, worked closely with the teachers in helping the students edit their stories for inclusion in the magazine. Each student was given individual attention so that they could have their own style in terms of typeface, images and design.

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Change in focus.** The original plan was that the group would produce a magazine and podcast, but this was changed to focusing on the magazine to better fit the interests and needs of the group. One of the artists/professionals engaged, Mark Devenport, broadcaster, pointed out that his expertise was more relevant to podcasting, although he was happy to be part of the project as it evolved. Conor McManus, lead teacher, reflected that the project was already very ambitious and the school was happy that it achieved everything it set out to do. The idea of a podcast can be picked up in the future.
- **Choosing artists.** One street artist started on the project, but the teachers were concerned about his ability to work with the students and so changed to another artist. This decision was made early enough not to delay the project.
- **Teacher cover.** The Nerve Centre ran a CPD session with teachers, but a second had to be cancelled because of difficulty finding teacher cover.
- **Software.** The school wanted to use Photoshop because it is the industry standard. Sarah Lawrence from the Nerve Centre pointed out that simpler software would have been easier to master and would have allowed greater creativity.
- **Property ownership.** The school had difficulty identifying who owned the wall on which they wanted to place a mural. Urban Villages advised on a process involving local shops and residents to provide reassurance that the project could go ahead.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have four observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	November 2022	December 2022	13 th March 2023	15 th June 2023
Artform	Creative writing	Journalism Visual Art Creative Writing Desk top publishing	Journalism Desk top publishing	Visual art
Year Group	Year 9	Yrs 9, 11, 12	Year 10	Year 10

Length of Session	2-3 hours	All day	All day	Half-day session
Number of Students	23	40	20	Groups of five

The impacts on the pupils are:

- **Confidence.** In her November observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, pointed out the confidence boost from working with a high profile professional: "They are being valued and know that they are special in that they are being given a chance to create their own stories and be listened to."
- **Critical thinking.** In her December observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reported that: "All of the sessions were encouraging the students to think creatively and critically as they reviewed all aspects of their own work in order to create more interesting articles and stronger images."

"There was a great ease with which the students were able to articulate their ideas, they had to evaluate their work and make appropriate changes. You could see that they had been influenced by working with the journalist Mark Devenport, they were looking at their work with the critical eye of a journalist." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, March observation

- **Team work.** Students had to work together and rely on each other during the project. One example is that when they were creating the mural: "Pupils had to communicate in so many ways, for instance holding the ladder for each other and working out who needed to stand where and who needed to do what. It was very much about a team effort, so they all had to pull together". In her June observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, pointed out that: "The collaborative ideas which formed the mural were a strong indication of how they have communicated with each other and the artist."
- **Engagement in learning.** Dawn Farquhar, Principal, thought that the quality of the magazine showed that pupils had developed their thinking skills, technical skills, but also their patience and persistence: they used Adobe Photoshop and Adobe In Design, professional packages that would not usually be encountered by Yr8 pupils.

"They all approached the task with real maturity; perhaps the professional space in which they found themselves encouraged them to do this. Each boy had access to his own Mac computer and the quiet way they worked was more akin to watching professionals at work." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, March observation

"I really loved this way of learning because it is a much freer way of learning and much more fun." Pupil interviewed by Marie

- **Awareness of career paths.** The students came to the Nerve Centre, which is in the heart of an area of film production and an inspiring place.

“A magnificent space in a large airy room, which is in the new premises of Nerve Belfast within the W5 area in the odyssey building overlooking the Belfast lough. It was a professional space in which they were able to work with state-of-the-art equipment suitable for the task in hand.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March observation

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Publicity for the school.** The project was featured in three regional newspapers. In addition, the social media posts received a particularly high reaction: an average story might receive 35 likings or sharings, but the Creative Schools Partnership project received 80+.
- **Profile of creative learning.** The teachers discussed the Creative Schools Partnership project in March 2023. The school already has a commitment to creative and digital learning through working with the Digital Hub at Saint Malachy’s School.

“I think Creative Schools Partnership has had its most notable impact this year. It has a higher profile in the school and there is a ripple effect from teachers who have been involved through the departments.” Dawn Farquhar, Principal

- **Teacher development.** Julia Brown, teacher, has joined Connor in having a specific role around induction of new teachers and pedagogy. Conor points out that the CPD provided in Creative Schools Partnership is to small groups of teachers and around specialist skills which is more likely to be applied than more broadly based training. Julia mentioned that she learnt techniques from the artist around using spray paint and employed a grid to transfer work to scale.
- **CPD.** The Nerve Centre delivered a session on Adobe for 12 teachers, the two involved in the project and a wider group, including teachers from Geography and History departments.
- **Interdepartmental working.** The project involved Media Studies and English. The Principal, Dawn Farquhar, commented that collaborative project helps students – and in some case teachers - to understand how subject connect.
- **Inspiration.** As he was in the building for the creative workshops, Mark Devenport, broadcaster, was able to address a Politics class.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the local community are:

- **Improved physical environment.** The site where the boys have created a mural was an eyesore beforehand. As the boys were installing the mural, members of the community came up and gave positive feedback.

- **Positive identity.** Interviewing members of the community and representing their stories in a newsletter and mural gives an important correction to the negative images and feelings around the community.

“Identity is very positively represented (in the mural) in an array of ways, there is diversity.”

The Principal, Dawn Farquhar

- **Higher profile of community organisations.** Conor McManus, lead teacher, pointed out that the community organisations will gain profile in the local area through the magazine.

Impacts on the artists

Sarah Lawrence from The Nerve Centre was inspired by seeing the work of the other artists. The mural artist used a technique of projecting photographs onto paper and tracing over them using a graffiti style which was like a reverse engineered way of working digitally, and therefore showed the connections with working physically.

One way of improving the projects in the future would be to have more time for planning and to bring all the artists together. Ideally the idea for the project should come from the teachers, artists and pupils working together, but this is difficult when the schools have to apply for funding and describe their proposed work up front.

School 10: St Joseph's Boys School

Previous projects

St Joseph's Boys School has been involved in Creative Schools Partnership from the beginning.

Post code Derry BT48 9NX

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 2-3	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	720	677	582	600
% of students who receive freeschool meals	66	66	64	59.3
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	316	345	268	277
Religion	99% Catholic	99% Catholic	Not available	98.7% Catholic
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Teenage Kicks – developing literacy through creating and producing own magazine	Becoming Joe – film and e-book on the life of year 8s	Joe Goes Digital	Joe's Musical Maestros
Artists and partners	Leona O'Neill, writer and journalist Jim McCafferty, photographer	Fionnuala Deane, John McDaid, Dog Ears John Peto, Sharon Tosh, Nerve Centre	Nerve Centre St Columbs Music School	St Columbs Music School
Timing	February to June 2018	April to June 2019	March to April 2021	to June 2023
Age of children	12	11	Mixed	13-14
Number of children	22	28 Year 8s and 5 Year 13s and 14s	12	18

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 10: Logic model for the project: Joe's Musical Maestros

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (music) Teacher CPD Showcase	Number of pupils (target 30)	Pupils develop their thinking skills, enhance wellbeing (including sense of belonging), increase their love of music and	Contribution to School Development Plan priorities KS3 Thinking skills and personal capabilities; Raising standards' Pastoral

		increase their understanding of other communities The school strengthens its community links and profile (e.g., with St Columb's School of Music, Urban Villages, Streets Alive-High Hopes Choir, Newgate Arts and Culture Centre, Nerve Belfast)	care/SEN/Catholic ethos; PR and marketing
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ASSUMPTIONS:

That impact is strengthened by: giving students a full experience from writing music, to programming, marketing and promoting it; bringing students together as a collective ensemble; involving other choirs and arts projects in performing at the concerts; and holding the concerts in a Catholic and a Protestant place of worship.

Process

Description

The **year one** project activity consisted of four full day workshops with Eimear Tracey, Dr Sean Doherty and Dan Ferguson on traditional Irish music and song-writing. The project involved a full class of Yr9s – 25 students, with 18 Yr11s acting as mentors.

The **year two** project activity continued the school's relationship with St Columbs Music School. The project involved a class of Yr10 boys, chosen because of their interest in Music. Activity consisted of creative workshops, clustered together with breaks in between, on song-writing and Irish traditional music.

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- Clear structure.** The boys decided early on that what they wanted to do was to write a song to celebrate the life of a teacher who had recently died. Margaret Ross, Lead Teacher, explains that: "Once they found a common ground, the lyrics flowed." Structure was also evident for individual creative workshops. For example, the March 2023 session progressed through: icebreaker games (saying their name to a beat), making percussive sounds with their voices, passing on a beat across a group, sustaining and adapting the sound to reflect other pupil's contribution, developing different harmonies across the groups.

“The groups started to harmonise and blend naturally without losing their original harmony. The facilitators kept revisiting the groups and encouraged the students to change the pitch and tempo. The magic within this group was the final result when they produced a sustained harmony through the use of their voices. Some of the students extended the exercise further by adding gesture and movement creating their own dance routine.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023

- **Strong engagement.** In her February observation, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, suggested that: “The students were engaged and they persevered, working slowly to perfect the chords and then to get a smooth transition from one to another as they played. A lot of positive reinforcement from Dan enabled the students to keep on track.”
- **High standard.** In her March observation, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, reflected that: “It is a joy to work with the quality and calibre of the artists involved. They set high aspirations for the students and challenge their thinking as well as developing their skills.”
- **Accessibility.** The Principal, Fiona Harrigan, points out that the way the project used the voice as a musical instrument was inspired because boys who had not previously engaged with Music could have an equal role.
- **Sustained engagement.** The artists said the first year was incredibly useful as a research phase to help them understand the possibilities. They learnt to be more flexible to accommodate changes, such as lower attendance than expected.
- **Self-directed learning.** The school came up with the idea of a song to commemorate a teacher who had died from cancer. The artists designed the creative sessions so that the pupils made most of the creative decisions: they set the tone (they changed from a sombre tone to a more joyful tone because they said the teacher would have hated the first), wrote the lyrics, wrote the music (including choosing between improvements suggested by the artists), and made suggestions of where people should stand during the performance.

“The boys were eager to learn. There was a hunger for Music from the beginning, which we don't always find in the grammar schools where we usually work and in which students might be forced by their parents to play an instrument and only later develop their own interest.” Louis Field, artist from St Columbs Music School

Challenges

The school’s ability to deliver arts projects itself is curtailed by:

- **The lower availability of funding for the arts,** and other budgetary pressures on the school.
- **Action short of strike,** which means that teachers cannot stay after teaching hours, and the leadership would not want to be seen to be questioning the teacher’s cause by

asking them to do so. In addition, the school has had very limited time to organise training for teachers, which would be an important way of spreading learning from Creative Schools Partnership.

“We are in a climate where teachers are working in siloes because of action short of strike. Creative Schools Partnership brings teachers together and shows them how to engage the boys.” Fiona Harrigan, Principal

All of these increase the importance of Creative Schools Partnership.

Other challenges for the project were:

- **Timetabling.** Scheduling the creative workshops for the same day and time each week is easier for the artists, but would mean that pupils were always missing the same class (even though it was Music, the project doesn't cover the curriculum) so two timings were chosen and alternated.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have three observations from the Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue.

Date	1 st February 2023	22 nd February 2023	2 nd March 2023
Artform	Music	Music	Music
Year Group	Year 10	Year 10 (20) and many other students from other year groups	Year 10 + other year groups involved in the choir and traditional band.
Length of Session	2 hours	2 hours	1.5 hours and then followed by a public performance in St. Columb's Hall
Number of Students	24	40 approximately	

The impacts on the pupils are:

- **Communication skills.** Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, pointed out that the project developed pupils' skills because they had to: write lyrics, listen to and learn chords, pay attention to the rhythm so the group kept together and improvise.

“A wide range of communication skills was addressed. The students playing the ukuleles were watching the demonstrations, listening and learning a new set of chords. They were also listening to each other as they played together ensuring that they were in unison. They were focused, disciplined and were paying attention especially when they were being shown

how to transition smoothly from one chord to another.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, February observation

“One exercise was about improvisation: the boys had to make a sound to two beats and to react to the person who went before them. They were encouraged to experiment with their voices and sound and not to overthink but to trust and react to the noise that their partner had created.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023

- **Mathematical skills.** In her February observation, Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, pointed out that: “There was quite a mathematical element to the music session and definitely a transference of learning, as they had to interpret the numbers, translate, and work out the timings. There were different chords with different timings.”
- **Teamworking.** In the February session, Marie recorded that the musician, Dan, said that “being adaptable and flexible is really important when you play music together as you need to be able to react and work with others.” The project brought together two groups: the Yr10s who had written the lyrics for the song and would be playing their ukuleles; and a choir of 20 boys from other year groups who would be singing the lyrics, as well as guitarists and one student on the keyboard.

“A great sense of unity and fun has come through the engagement with the music.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023

- **Confidence.** The students played their song at two public performances, one at a community performance at the school on 10th March, and one with the band The Swingles. Following on from the project last year, 18 students have had their poems published. Years 10 and 12 have also gained from a session in which they passed their poetry skills onto first years.

“You could see how the confidence of the choir has grown when they stood up to sing. They stood up straight and sang out confidently.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, February observation

“It was great to see the delight in the students when they realised how together they had created a very beautiful harmonious sound just using their voices.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March observation

“Some boys had really good musical talent and didn't realise it. There was a fighting spirit, We gave them a challenge, and they rose to it.” Louis Field, artist from St Columbs Music School

- **Wellbeing.** The first two sessions had discussions about the teacher who was the subject of the project, about cancer and death. Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, said in her 22nd February observation: “The sheer enjoyment and fun that was evident in this session would lift anyone’s spirits. There was a great feeling of collegiality that obviously stems from the good relationships that exist between the artist, the teachers and the

pupils. There was a great energy and excitement in the room. There were working together as a community of learners and you could see how well-connected they have become.” There are also individual impacts. For example, one student who is on the autistic spectrum would normally avoid noise because of sensory overload, and after the project, he has chosen Music GCSE.

- **Concentration.** Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, suggested in her February observation that: “The coordination skills that the students have developed from learning how to play the ukuleles has increased their concentration span.”
- **Music exams.** Composition is part of GCSE Music, which means these students will have a head start if they do choose the subject at the next stage. Shauna Cassidy, lead teacher, pointed out that this group is now the best in the year in terms of ukulele playing, which means that they have more choice of music to explore in the Music lessons, rather than being limited by repertoire with the easier chords.

“The students mastered tricky chords on the ukulele, which opens them up to a higher musical experience because they are no longer restricted in what they can play and can choose what to play.” Shauna Cassidy, lead teacher

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Skill development of teachers.** Thinking specifically about this year’s project, the Music teachers saw different ways of working, for example, starting with the lyrics rather than the music, which gives different possibilities for composing. The teachers also liked the way the composer recorded students’ work as they progressed as a way of encouraging critical thought, and would try that in future classes. Overall, Creative Schools has directly involved 12 teachers as well as the principals (from English, digital literacy, Music and Publicity); more than a quarter of all the teachers in the school. There are many examples of teachers applying creative learning, inspired by Creative Schools Partnership: for example, Head of English has continued to encourage pupils to write poetry and has continued the relationship with Poetry Works to ensure the poems are published. The Principal, Fiona Harrigan, thinks that all teachers in the school will have heard of Creative Schools Partnership even if they haven’t had time to reflect on the possibilities for their work.
- **Interest in Music.** The number of students studying Music for GCSE has increased from two last year to 12 this year, with interest coming especially from Creative Schools Partnership participants.
- **Teaching of Drama.** The school has created a post of Drama teacher, which it has not had before. The new Drama teacher is already creating ripples across the school from her approach, for example, asking if she can remove the desks from the classroom.

- **Interdepartmental collaboration.** Action short of strike has increased the likelihood that teachers work in siloes: Creative Schools Partnership is a powerful correction to this trend.
- **School profile.** The Swingles concert had 45 boys from the school on stage performing.
- **Creative learning.** Shauna Cassidy, lead teacher, believes that: “I do think creative learning is the way to go. Otherwise, there are parts of the curriculum our boys can’t access. There should be blocks of creative learning across the school.”
- **Leadership.** Out of the four boys nominated for head boy this year, three had been on the Creative Schools Partnership in Yr8, and all had studied Music at GCCE and gain an A grade. Shauna Cassidy, lead teacher, points out that Drama and Music are important pathways for leadership in schools because they teach performance skills but also resilience.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the local community are:

- **Attending a concert.** Coming to a concert, let alone one with their boy performing, would have been a new experience for many parents, and a highly emotional one.
- **Good Relations.** Although it wasn't commented on, the musicians from the Music School are Protestant.

Impacts on the artists

Dan Ferguson from St Columbs Music School said that the sessions were particularly satisfying because “There were some hidden gems”, pupils who were talented musically and haven’t had the opportunity to develop their ability before. The project required a more organic approach than they would usually adopt and this is now a tool they can deploy on other occasions. The natural next stage would be to bring the pupils to the Music School, which is in the process of building a recording studio.

Two of the students have expressed a desire to have lessons at St Columbs Music School. The Music School operates a bursary scheme, which will allow this to happen.

School 11: Belfast Model For Girls

Previous projects

Belfast Model for Girls had taken part in three other years of the programme.

Post code: Belfast BT14 6NQ

	Pilot	Yr 1	Yrs 4-5
Total enrolments	946	983	1085
% of students who receive free school meals	61	61	54.6
Number of pupils with Special Educational Needs	352	341	169 (stage 1-3)
Religion	89% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 10% Other / Unknown	88% Protestant, 1% Catholic, 11% Other / Unknown	80.7% Protestant, 1.6% Catholic, 17.7% Other / Unknown
Creative Schools Partnerships Project	Landscapes - explored students' physical and metaphorical landscapes	Home/Shelter – explored past ways of living and feelings about home for students, their parents, and groups in the community	
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	Anushiya Sundaralingam, visual artist Michelle Young, theatre practitioner Visits to the Folk Museum, Lyric Theatre,	Liam B de Frinse, visual artist Jazzmin McClure, drama artist
Timing	March to September 2018	April to June 2019	February to June 2023
Age of children	12-13	11-12	13-14
Number of children	50	17	20

Logic model

This is my conceptualisation of the project using the information in the application form.

Figure 11: Description of the project from the application form: Our story

Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
Creative workshops (poetry, film-making,	Number of pupils (target: 45 Yr9)	Pupils raise their aspirations, develop	Contribution to SDP Priority 1: Providing

creative writing, drama) Research (into Women Together and their role negotiating peace in NI, Belfast Girls, Film-Making NI) Visit to Lyric Theatre Teacher CPD and sharing Showcase Letters to MLAs on hopes for a better future		their confidence, independence and self-discipline School strengthens cross-curricular links, develops community connections (e.g., with Urban Villages, Streetbeat, Crumlin Road Gaol)	quality learning and teaching Contribution to SDP Priority 2: Developing the culture, character and care of learning, promoting, promoting the spiritual, moral, intellectual, cultural and physical development and growth of each student
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ASSUMPTIONS:

That impact is strengthened by: having a historic perspective; hearing inspiring stories of women activists; reflecting on what it means to be a young female from north Belfast in the 21st century; having students to new environments; making the learning real, challenging, interactive, engaging and fun; ensuring learning suits different styles – achievement for all.

Process

Description

Activity was delayed in year one, but started promptly in September of year two.

The project involved 20 students, who were in Yr10 for the second year. The aim of the project was to give the pupils a voice about issues that mattered to them.

The **year two** project activity consisted of:

- Visual art workshops with Liam B de Frinse.
- Drama workshops with Jazzmin McClure.
- A visit to the Grand Opera House to see *The Ocean at the End of the Lane*.
- A visit to Crumlin Road Gaol. This is less than five minutes from the school, but many of the class hadn't visited it before.

The pupils chose the output, which is that they wanted to produce podcasts. This fitted well with the School Development Plan, which has a focus on speaking and listening in literacy.

Marie O'Donoghue was a great support to the lead teacher, but also to the pupils.

"It was very helpful having Marie as a middle person for the kids. They were familiar with her, so she wasn't a stranger coming into the group. They looked forward to her being in the

class. She asked questions and encouraged them. It made them that their opinions were valued.” Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher

Indicators of quality

Interviews and observation forms evidenced these facets of quality:

- **Clear objectives.** In her March 2023 observation, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, commented that: “The girls were creating ideas for podcasts and were asked to produce a three-minute synopsis of the proposed content.”
- **Clear structure.** In her January observation, the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, described the activity in the session: “The activity was incrementally built up through the session by using specific tasks that enabled students to participate on different levels. This was all done through drama games, beginning with imagining yourself as a pot of paint and using the shaking out and jumping exercise to release tension in the body. Partner work then ensued, using the notebook to record issues that concerned them that could potentially be used a future reference in the project. The groups then increased to five in a circle where they had to create shapes such as circles and triangles, moving onto specific objects, such as washing machine car and bathroom.”
- **Self-directed learning.** The subjects for the podcasts were chosen by the pupils because this was a relevant medium to young people and would allow them to talk freely about controversial issues without being seen. Initial ideas included: the impact of phones/social media on their lives, the troubles, their identity, their aspirations for the future, strategies for coping with anxiety. Pupils also chose the people to work with. Students carried out independent research as part of developing the podcasts.

“Pupils’ literacy skills are being developed and perhaps they are engaging more because they have been asked to work on a topic that they are passionate about and want to explore.”
Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023 observation

“The introduction of new skills in the earlier workshops meant that Liam could then have multiple activities going on in the later workshops as the students worked independently on the various aspects of their bags. They were working independently and managing their own learning.” Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue, June 2023 observation

- **Pupil engagement.** Liam engaged students through dramatic effect, practical skill development, small group work and having an outcome. Students created their own lettering and designs for a tote bag with one side having a shared logo. Working towards an end product helped to motivate the students and gave them a memento and public sign of their time on the project.

“The activities were cleverly designed, pitched at the right level, not too simple and not overly complicated. There was enough challenge to keep pupils engaged.” Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher

“The initial introduction was like a performance, Liam arrived dressed like the stereotypical artist complete with beret, Breton striped top and a selection of his own work to share with the students. He initially spoke to them and encouraged them to interact, to look at his work and he shared with them his own story of how he became an artist.” Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023 June observation

“Liam had designed the workshops into smaller manageable tasks meant that the students could all achieve but it also gave freedom to those who were more confident to move ahead and experiment further. I think Liam’s experimental approach and his deliberate choice of tasks that were short and manageable meant that everyone was engaged, and they felt valued.” Marie O’Donoghue, March 2023 June observation

One of the lessons of the project was that full day sessions worked well for the pupils.

“I didn't think the pupils would hold their attention for a whole day on one project, but they did, and it created a nice atmosphere in the room. Sometimes when the kids are dragging their feet at the beginning of a session, you can feel a bit rushed towards the end. A whole day was very relaxed and enjoyable.” Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher

Challenges

The challenges of the project were:

- **Timetabling.** Creative workshops were generally held on a Monday afternoon, but around eight couldn't take place because of other school commitments.
- **Space.** The first four visual arts sessions were in classrooms rather than an art studio.

Impacts

Impacts on students

I have three observation forms from the Programme Manager, Marie O’Donoghue. The last one summarised three observations.

Date	9 th January 2023	13 th March 2023	March to June 2023
Artform	Drama	Drama	Art and Design
Year Group	Year 10	Year 10	Year 10
Length of Session	2 hours	All day	One full day and two short sessions
Number of Students	30	20	Full class 20

The impacts on the pupils are:

- **Communication skills.** In her 13th March observation, Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, reported that the activities were focused around communication e.g., structuring ideas, writing scripts for the podcasts: "They are developing writing skills, interviewing skills and speaking skills.. When structuring their podcasts, they were thinking about what is it that is important about listening to a podcast and what is it that you want your audience to hear and take away."
- **Critical thinking skills.** The 13th March session included a discussion of the context and impact of peace walls near where the pupils live.

"All through his sessions Liam was creating opportunities for the students to think for themselves and to use their own ideas. He spoke to them about what actually art is and how important the creative process is. He introduced them to Gombrich's idea "There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists." He wanted them to feel that as you are involved in the creative process you become the art." Programme Manager, Marie O'Donoghue, June observation

- **Creativity.** The 9th January session included an activity where pupils presented four scenes from a fairy story in freeze frame. As Jazzmin McClure explained: "I used lots of quick fire exercises like freeze framing that don't seem like much but are specifically designed to build confidence and develop team work and problem solving skills. They are performing without realising it." Liam de Frinze's sessions included practical skill development e.g., cutting stencils, mixing paints, printing, drawing exercises (blind drawing, working with left and right hands simultaneously, drawing a circle without a compass i.e., using cardboard and drawing pins, drawing from a felt not seen object), as well as an introduction to concepts such as negative space. Liam mentioned that he stopped students copying each other. Also, when he showed them some of his sculpture, one piece got broken and he said: "don't worry, it can be turned into something else", which illustrates the reworking aspect of creativity.
- **Confidence.** Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, thought that the pupils gained from hearing about the artists' careers and saw them as positive role models going from Belfast to achieving international success.
- **Engagement in learning.** Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, said that before the project, the pupils were generally lacking in empathy, self-centred and inward-focused. They matured during the project and were visibly more outward-focused, aware of the people around them and how they perceived the pupils.

"The project has improved pupils' oracy skills, especially their ability to think around a subject. It was very evident vocally that they were approaching things in a more considered way, with greater maturity in dealing with difficult subjects."

- **Wellbeing.** Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, observed that the pupils gained from talking about the challenges they have and realising they were not the only one.

Impacts on the school

The impacts on the school are:

- **Teacher development.** Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, has started using more active approaches to teaching in his classes, getting pupils to act out stories from the books they are reading. He also brought a writer into class to complement the project.

“Before Creative Schools Partnership I would have been very nervous getting the kids up and doing things for fear that chaos would ensure. What the project taught me is that a bit of chaos is OK especially if it is productive, it leads you into discussion of something you didn't think of. It let me let go of my control. The kids noticed I was using one of Jazzmin's approaches and said, are you only doing that because we did it on Monday?!”

- **Interdepartmental connection.** The project had formerly been run by the Art department, and they gave full support to Nick, who is from the English department.
- **Creative learning.** Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, said that schools should be more than exam factories. They should spend more time on cultural capital. He is aware of at least five teachers in the Art department who use creative methods in class. However, the school has decided not to continue with Creative Schools Partnership next year.

Impacts on the local community

The impacts on the local community are:

- **Community engagement.** The Urban Villages Coordinator came into school and told pupils about community projects and resources they could access. Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, knows of at least five girls in the class who went to one of these projects and have stuck with it.
- **Good Relations.** In the process of researching the podcasts, the girls spoke to their families and brought in historical documents, including magazines from 40 years ago talking about political issues. Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher, thought that the project encouraged the pupils to be more open to cross community relations.

“Pupils might have been nervous of what their parents would think about them being open to cross-community relations, but the project definitely planted a seed that made them more tolerant and less likely to resort to stereotypes.” Nick McIlhatton, lead teacher

Impacts on the artists

Liam B de Frinse is a visual artist with a long and successful career. In the future, he would like the project to include visits to galleries and museums and an exhibition.

Jazzmin McClure said the process of researching podcasts (which she did as well as the pupils) was useful, and has opened up a whole new area of work for her. She has done radio before, but not podcasts.

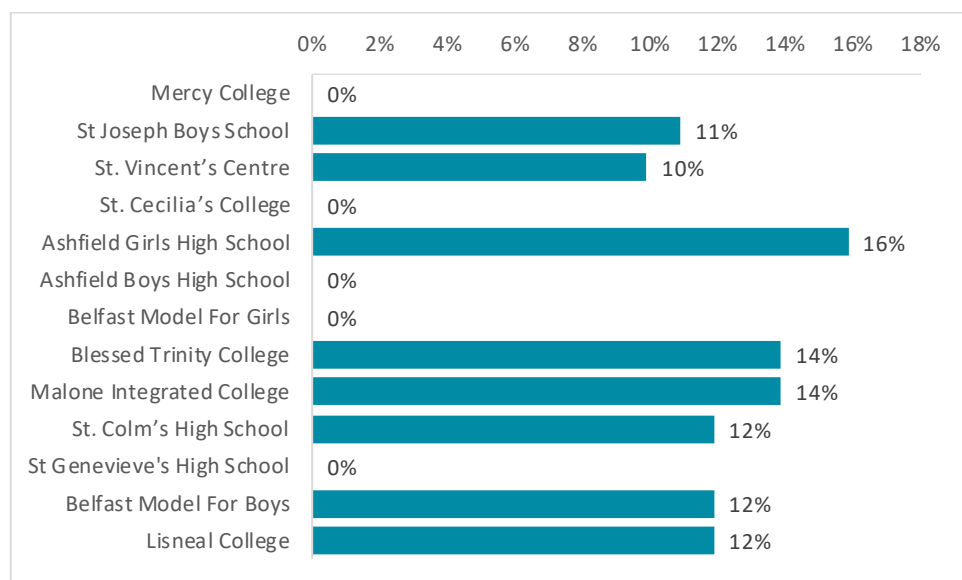
Jazzmin thought that Creative Schools Partnership had more impact than other arts programmes because it involves schools, teachers and pupils:

“Creative Schools Partnership has a more rounded approach and a better outcome for everybody. If you are working with children, you are longing for teachers to join in and see the value of what you are doing. If you are working with teachers, you are hoping some of it will trickle down to pupils. Some of them have a light bulb moment, but if the rest of the school doesn't agree, it is hard for them to stand alone and teach creativity. Creative Schools Partnership gives schools, teachers and pupils an experience of a different approach.”

Pupil Survey Responses

I received 102 responses from eight of the 11 schools, an excellent sample from which to draw conclusions.

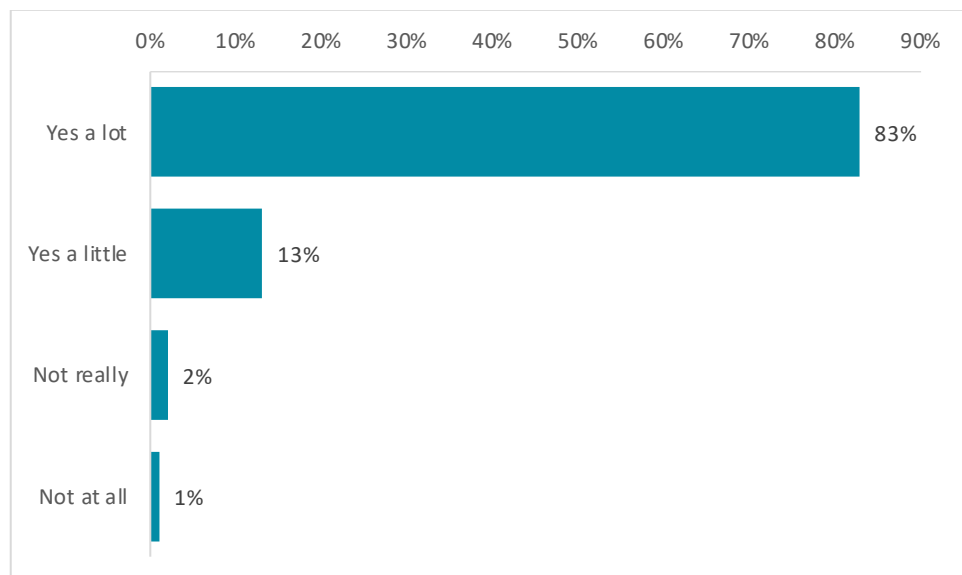
Figure 12: School



Quality of experience

96% of students said they enjoyed the creative learning project. Comments were that it was fun, they enjoyed getting out of class to do workshops and visits, they loved working with elders, they learnt a lot and built their confidence.

Figure 13: Did you enjoy the creative learning project?



Pupils particularly enjoyed working with a professional artist, meeting people and visiting places in the community, learning creative techniques and working intensively on one project/activity. The “other” responses were: getting out of the house, spending time with friends, having a variety of experiences, learning in a different way and the sense of achievement.

Figure 14: What did you enjoy about the creative learning project? Please tick all that apply



“The project had a variety of different experiences. Workshops, performances, meeting professional actors, famous author. Having a more “hands on experience” in learning is very enjoyable.”

“I enjoyed it because my writing skills and stories have got way better from the first time we started creative schools.”

“I really enjoyed learning about the life that older people have experienced and how life has changed.”

“I enjoyed becoming more aware of things.

“I enjoyed making new friends and having a bit of fun and learning at the same time.”

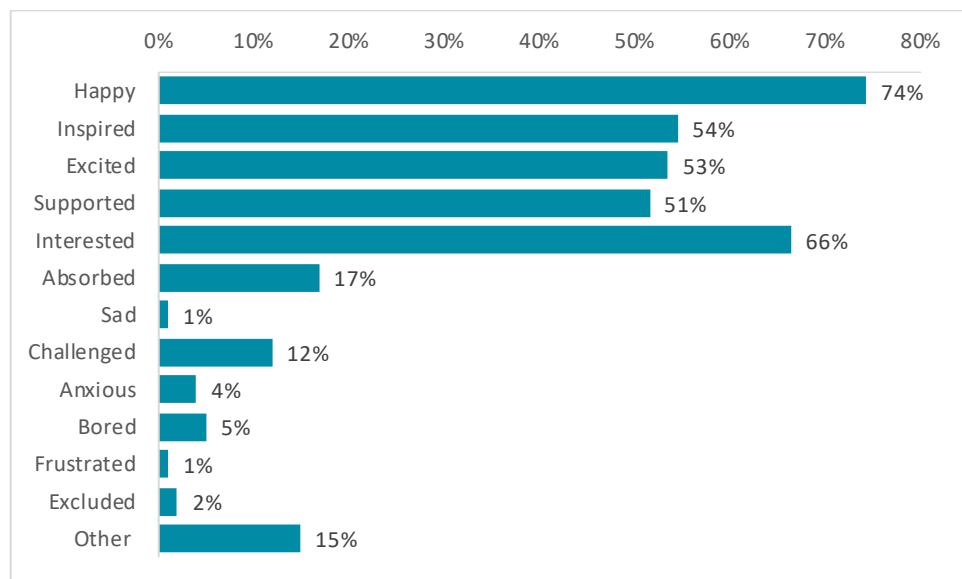
74% of pupils reported feeling happy in the creative learning sessions with the professional artist, an indicator of the contribution to wellbeing.

“I felt really positive and I was very happy to get out of classes.”

“I was happy most of time but some sessions I was bored.”

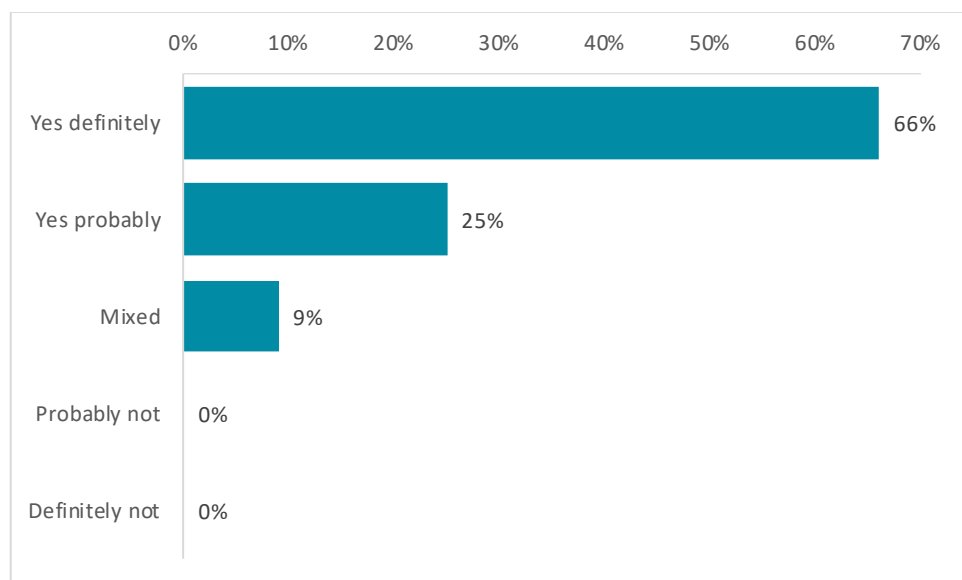
“Challenged in a good way.”

**Figure 15: How did you feel in the creative learning sessions with the professional artist?
Please tick all that apply**



91% of students said they felt their voice mattered and their ideas were listened to. None said they didn't feel this. Comments emphasised the positive impact of being heard, an understanding that other people needed to be heard to, and an admission that some pupils hadn't taken up the opportunity to be heard.

Figure 16: Did you feel that your voice mattered and your ideas were listened to in the creative learning project?



"Everyone was very good at listening and bringing new ideas to the table."

"I'm sure my voice did matter and everyone else's too."

"We put all our thoughts into our monologues."

"The classes were all about being listened to and this made me feel good."

"My ideas and feelings were listened to by the artist and my teacher and that made me feel like I mattered."

"I got to be myself when doing drama and be a person I haven't before."

"I felt very valued and included."

"Everyone seemed so invested in all conversations."

"Everyone was being included and asked about their opinion and input, which connected everyone who took part."

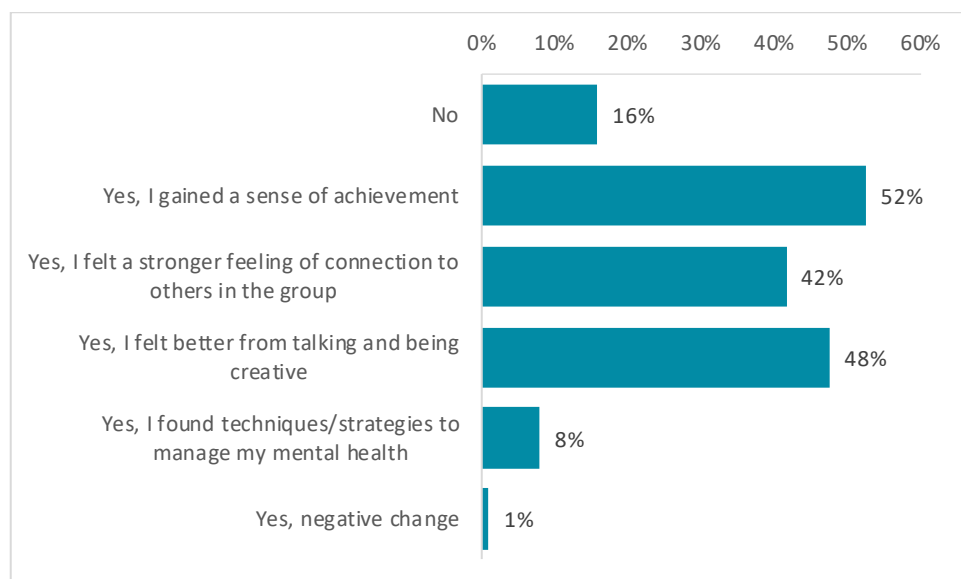
"Yes but no because I didn't really talk that much."

"I don't really know because I was too anxious to speak."

Outcomes

83% of pupils said the Creative Schools Partnership project had a positive impact on their mental health and wellbeing. I have kept a lot of the comments to show the pupils' voice. One student said the project made them more anxious.

Figure 17: Did the creative learning project affect your mental health/wellbeing? Please tick all that apply



"It got me more out of my comfort zone like speaking in front of more people and being able to act without getting too anxious."

"It put me in a more positive mind set."

"It is very good for your wellbeing."

"I feel like I can be myself and not be shy in front of people I don't really know."

"I feel more confident and take pride in everything I do now."

"I feel my mental health has changed a lot as. Before Creative Schools, I was insecure and scared of who I might become, but now I'm very happy in who I have become because of Creative Schools."

"I felt a lot better about myself."

"It made me believe that I could do it and I felt better about myself."

"It made me feel more confident."

"I really started to believe in myself."

"It was a bit scary to talk in front of people but, when I did, I felt better about myself."

"Just felt a lot better able to talk to everyone else."

"I made better mates with my class."

"I really liked filming with Graham and learning how to use the camera."

I really enjoyed working with the senior citizens.

"Yes, because I was interviewed on the BBC."

"I felt happy after."

"It really helped me with my confidence as well as my wellbeing."

"I feel much better talking in a group after taking part in this project."

"I felt I have made more friends. I enjoyed talking through the project as well as an understanding with the people in Newington. It has made me more confident with new people."

"I am now significantly cooler."

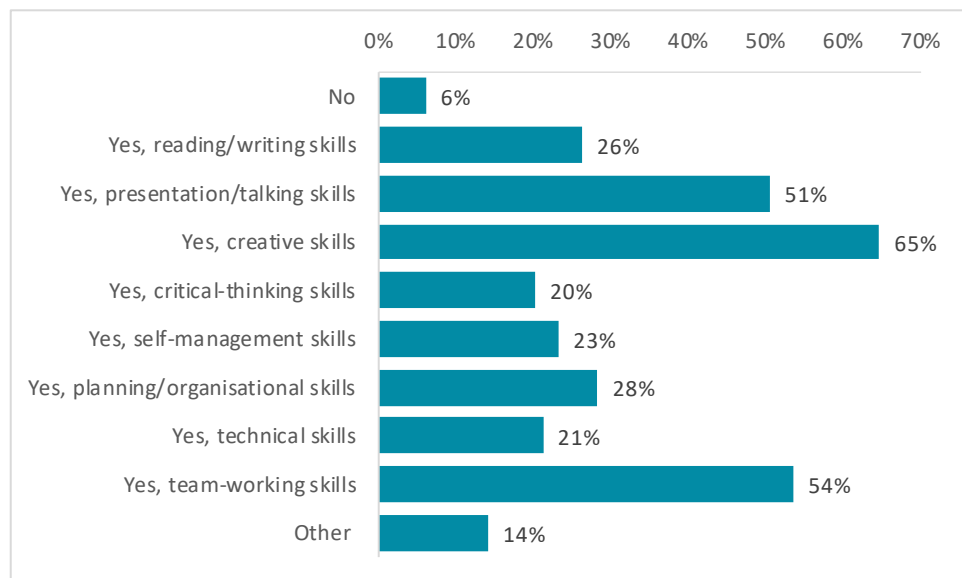
"I felt very happy when I found out I was going and loved every minute."

"It really helped me connect with people."

"It is relaxing to work with the clay."

94% of pupils said they developed skills from the Creative Schools Partnership project. The main impacts were on creative skills, team-working and presentation/talking. The “other” answers were mainly aspects of literacy and also leadership.

Figure 18: Did you develop any skills from the creative learning project? Please tick all that apply



“My reading has got way better.”

“I think my hand writing has gotten better and I am able to imagine things a lot more.”

“I’ve learned how to be a good ambassador for my school.”

“Skills in taking responsibility.”

84% of pupils said the Creative Schools Partnership project had a positive effect on their relationship to learning, especially in making them feel happier in school.

Comments references sense of anticipation, the confidence from achievement, persistence, initiative, motivation to try new things, and feeling of being special.

“It definitely gave me a sense of achievement.”

“It encouraged me to approach new challenges.”

“Yes, because now I can work through all my work without asking for help and whenever I need help, I can ask and it will be easier to understand.”

“I have learnt so much new stuff and it’s been so much fun.”

“Yes, I like this way we are together not afraid of making mistakes.”

"It made me want to come into school more often."

"It made me look forward to going to school."

"It has made me see that you can always give something a try."

"I was really happy and the Newington members were really kind."

"It was a fun way to learn something new."

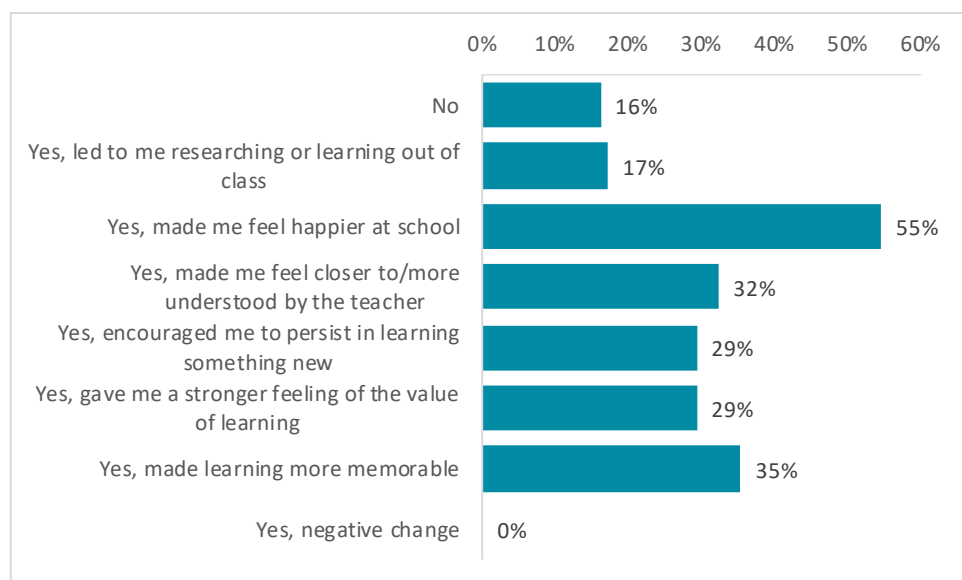
"It was really engaging."

"I loved every day of it."

"Not everyone has the chance of education never mind the privilege of working with a professional artist."

"It made me realise that even just missing one class you will miss a lot of learning."

Figure 19: Did the creative learning project affect your relationship to learning? Please tick all that apply



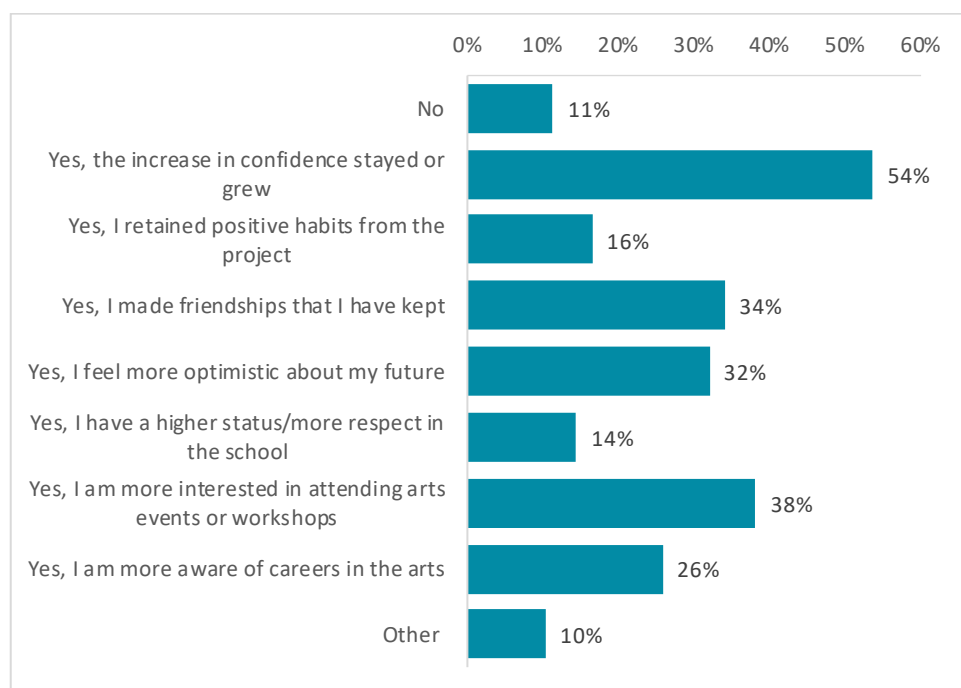
89% of pupils said the positive impacts from the Creative Schools Partnership were sustained. 54% said that the increase in confidence stayed or grew. 32% said they feel more optimistic about their future.

"I've made so many friendships and I now keep a journal at home too for my mental health as I've been taught with this that it's not okay to hide your feelings."

"I'm thinking about a future with filming and I didn't really think I could do this."

"Good feeling that other people care what happens to you. Different from other classes we can talk and we are listened to."

Figure 20: Did the creative learning project have any long-term effects on you? Please tick all that apply



Overall views

I asked what, if anything, was special about the creative learning project. Answers were:

- Making friends and spending time with friends.

"I felt like we all got along really well and made loads of memories."

- Meeting pupils from other schools.
- The sense of everyone working together.
- The freedom.

"I like the pottery because you can make any shape you want. It's fun making something you want. We choose what to make and are free to do what we think works."

- The relaxed but productive atmosphere.
- Creating.
- Performing.

- Visiting a theatre, museum, exhibition.
- Working with professional artists.
- Working with other people, including elders.
- Gaining confidence and self-belief.

"It made me believe that I wasn't a failure."

- Learning about life, including other cultures.

"Being able to talk about anything to people involved in the project, things like school and future careers as if we've known each other and learning about their life in the past and present."

- The difference from other lessons.
- "It wasn't something you expect to do at school."

92% of pupils said they would recommend creative learning projects like this to other pupils at their school.

The reservations were that: some pupils might be too anxious to take part, and they respondent wanted to take part in the project again themselves rather than passing it on.

"I would absolutely recommend this. It gives an opportunity of learning and opening your imagination to learn and explore. It is super fun and you make great friends along the way."

"It would be a fantastic opportunity for many other pupils to experience this opportunity. I feel it would be beneficial for socialising, well-being, confidence building and expressing themselves freely."

"I wish everyone in every school could do the creative school project because creative schools is so much fun and other than having fun you are also learning new things."

"Overall Creative Schools has been amazing. It gave us so many opportunities and gave us the chance to be ourselves. My favourite trip we have been on is maybe the walk of the solar system or in Coleraine we went to a river and there was canoes and these floaty things you could jump off. When I got there all my friends got into the water but I didn't because I was scared but when they all convinced me to, I did and I had so, so much fun."

"If you like acting and enjoy being around people and are confidence then it probably wouldn't be so bad but if you are really anxious about that sort of stuff then no it doesn't help."

"I would recommend it to other pupils but I also want to continue the Creative Schools project."

"Overall Creative Schools has made a change in me, my class, my friends and my happiness. I loved it and I would love to do it again next year."

"Just felt good and I was interested in what we were doing."

"I would definitely recommend this project because working with Newington residents was a new experience and I would like to share that with other students."

"100% It is great and I would want to do it again if I was given the opportunity."

"This was a very enjoyable project that I recommend to anyone."

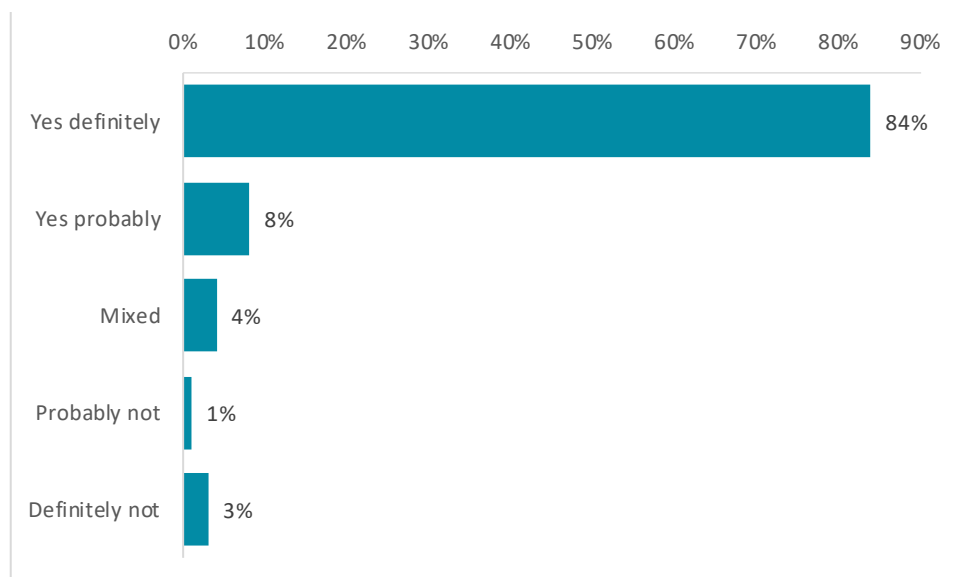
"It helps gain an understanding and new friendships with pupils in your year as well as new skills for adulthood."

"Everyone should have a chance of doing art."

"Creative Schools is the best part of my day when I have it, I have learned so much and am more open minded."

"It was amazing and I can't wait till next year!!!"

Figure 21: Would you recommend creative learning projects like this to other pupils at your school?



Reflection: A Model Of Artists' Skill

Creative schools partnership as a model of good practice

Creative Schools Partnership is acknowledged to be a model of good practice because of the:

- Breadth and closeness of the partnership.
- Commitment of the schools.
- Structure of programme - having sustained engagement with the same schools over years.
- Impact on young people who might otherwise lack the chance to develop and demonstrate their potential.
- The careful choice of artists.

The first four points have been discussed in detail in previous evaluations. I seek to give a slightly different focus to each report so this year I thought I would reflect on the skills of the artist facilitator, which is the most fundamental, but also easily overlooked determinant of the success of Creative Schools Partnership.

I tend to good practice principles as trade-offs rather than absolutes to emphasise the dynamism of the process.

Balancing structure with openness

Artists tend to adopt a relaxed, informal style that subtly blends structure and flexibility.

- Structure means: having clear objectives including around the final outcome; having a resource of exercises that develop specific skills or relationships; breaking activities down into steps that are easily understood; having an order of activities to ensure progression; and pacing the session to ensure objectives are met.
- Flexibility means: inviting and being open to outputs from the young people, including following their interests and aptitudes; embodying curiosity, risk-taking, experimentation and non-judgemental thinking; maintaining an aura of confidence if and when circumstances change; and being able to combine the ideas of different students so each has ownership of the work.

"Facilitating a creative workshop is about collaborating not directing. Artists and students both contribute strongly to the creative process. And the students who master a skill first naturally take a role showing others, in themselves learning most by teaching." Louis Field, artist from St Columbs Music School

Structure:

- So that objectives are manifest and can therefore be met.
- So that participants know what is expected of them since too much freedom can be stressful, or time consuming to resolve.

"It is not all down to participants to do what they want. It might take time for them to adopt a directive role. At the same time, there is something special about an artist opening up new ways of thinking and setting some boundaries. You need some structure for improvisation." Ayeshya Mailey, dance artist

"It is participant-led but you couldn't just come in with a blank page. There have to be parameters, options, choices that ignite pupils' imaginations." Kwa Daniels, Bounce Culture NI

- Because creativity thrives on and is often inspired by barriers.

"Giving limitations is better than an open field or we will get McDonald logos and images not related to creative expression." Kerrie Hanna, artist

- Because artistic quality is often achieved by the artist curating or collaging individual work so that participants can clearly see their own work, but the overall piece exceeds their expectations and has wide appeal to and meaning for the audience.
- Because communicating creativity as an evolving process that naturally allows for revision, and reworking builds confidence and reduces fear of failure; and is a useful reframing for wider life experiences.
- Because participants often describe a key pleasure of creative workshops as working with a professional artist, which includes understanding their career path and way of thinking.

Flexibility:

- Because the skills and interests of participants will vary.

"During creative workshops, you are trying to read the room. You will be caught off guard by something. It is a dance or an exchange rather than a delivery. That is why I like it. It is creative having to respond to things you didn't anticipate." Karen Kinghan, artist

"As a performer I am always learning and as a facilitator we must be always listening, we take the good ideas and run with them. Not everyone feels the same every week so you have to be able to adapt to the participants, give a bit more take a bit less, be open: that is the joy of creativity." Christina Nelson, artist/actor

- Because the time participants take for tasks can vary in ways that are not always predictable. For example, fast pace can be a device to maintain the concentration of groups; slow pace can be a motivational approach because participants see that they have time to learn and develop their technique and so avoid failure.

“You have to have things up your sleeve, but you have to be prepared to be flexible. The last thing you would want to do with teenagers is to talk at them rather than working with them.” Mark Devenport, broadcaster

- Because even if teachers can provide background information on participants, their actual abilities often exceed partners’ predictions.
- Because drop-in workshops will vary in the number of participants and even set groups will have participants who join part the way through a series of workshops or who are unavailable for some sessions.

“You have to be able to switch at short notice. On the day of the second performance, one of the pupils who had a key part didn't turn up. I helped one of the other pupils learn her lines, and it all went off fine.” Laura Douglas, director

- Because even in co-creative approaches, young people vary in the extent to which they seek control of the creative process, and experienced facilitators provide a range of roles to meet individual needs as well as fostering the sense of an interdependent team.

Balancing skill development with capacity building

Being proactive:

- Providing materials and employing techniques that young people or teachers do not usually have access to since using expensive equipment or materials communicates trust in the participants, which reinforces the feeling that the experience is special.
- Encouraging and facilitating follow on activity, for example through providing resources for home use or continuation between workshops.

Graham Ginty, film and music artist, is always on the look-out for apps especially free apps that can be used on iPads, so that the techniques teachers and students learn in Creative Schools Partnership projects they can apply in the class or at home. Each year, he finds new tools, for example, Filmic Pro, Comic Life, iMovie, Cap Cut. “These apps are game changers for me. They allow me to make the process accessible to all.”

- While also demonstrating the availability of creative materials, for example through recycling or use of found objects to communicate the wide opportunities for creativity.

Drawing teachers into the delivery process:

- Ensuring teachers take part in workshops so that they see lessons to inform their practice. These techniques can be regarding creative methods, but might also be ways to motivate participants or the need to revise limiting beliefs about participants (realisation of their potential/seeing participants in a new light).
- Which amplifies and sustains the impact of the project.

- And changes attitudes (demonstrates the value of the arts) such as to increase the school's understanding of, and commitment to, creative learning.

So, overall creative workshops are balancing:

- An intense and absorbing immediate activity with:

Sheena Kelly, dance artist, ran a session early on that included a series of rapid exercises using movement and music, in which pupils were able to dance in any way that suited their bodies. Sheena had deliberately designed the pace to be fast: "so that pupils didn't have time to overthink, to feel embarrassed."

- Stimulation of changes in skills, knowledge, confidence and beliefs of young people and teachers so as to maximise long term impact.

All of these points underline that facilitation of creative workshops is a highly skilled process which can be supported by:

- Having clear objectives.
- Having sustained engagement with young people - prioritising depth over sheer numbers.

"For me, working with children is about the relationships. If you get that right, then the quality of artistic work created far exceeds expectations." Patricia Meir, Drama artist

- Allowing enough time for planning, and paying external artists fairly including for preparation.
- Having support during the workshop to resolve problems that arise.
- Organising a sharing or celebration so young people can reflect on and celebrate their achievements.
- Incorporating experiences such as visits to exhibitions or community settings as well as team work so that young people have sources of inspiration through relationships and experiences as well as materials and guidance from the facilitator.
- Considering how the process can best contribute to the practice of the artist facilitator and develop their artistic practice.

This analysis leads back neatly to the beginning, in emphasising the value and wisdom of the structure of Creative Schools Partnership, which has all these elements.

Conclusions And Recommendations

Conclusions

Creative Schools Partnership was particularly effective and impactful this year. The community development events run by the Programme Manager intensified the impact and gave the sense of a shared initiative or movement. Projects were ambitious, benefiting from four years of experience and community connections. Application of creative learning beyond the programme (i.e., application of project based, student led sessions using theatre, dance, visual art, music, writing, film, or other artform to explore, discuss or present insights or knowledge) is also noticeable this year, overturning a reversal due to COVID. There is a growing belief that schools need to use creative learning to help improve attendance rates, which have not recovered since the pandemic. Even if exam results and exam teaching were seen as more important, creative learning would still be a logical precondition to attract the children into class. More noticeable this year was a view from lead teachers that these kinds of projects should be available to all pupils in all schools.

We surveyed pupils this year. Responses show positive outcomes for confidence, wellbeing and engagement with learning. This is consistent with anecdotal evidence from schools. Teachers often referred to the lasting effect of Creative Schools Partnership: where pupils or classes who took part in projects in earlier years are still distinguishable by their confidence, engagement in class and leadership role in the school.

The community element of Creative Schools Partnership is unusual for arts education projects and this is part of the reason for the success of the programme. Results suggest that an outward orientation and creative thinking challenge pupils' limiting assumptions and raise their aspirations.

I brought artists into the spotlight this year. As my quality model suggests, the artists on the programme bring considerable expertise to the schools including: relaxing and reassuring the pupils so they are comfortable showing vulnerability; inspiring and exciting the pupils so they can sustain concentration over a relatively long period of time; passing on expert techniques through giving and demonstrating step-by-step instructions; ensuring ownership by being responsive to students' ideas and feelings; and gelling the group by giving moments for revelation, sharing, interdependency and celebration. Pupils told us that working with professional artists was the most enjoyable part of Creative Schools Partnership.

The impact of Creative Schools Partnership greatly exceeds the cost. The funding enables peak moments which have a ripple effect through schools. The programme also raises the morale of teachers and demonstrates attention to their wellbeing, which is vital given increasing problems with retention.

Recommendations

Creative Schools Partnership should continue.

The process of bringing artists, teachers and pupils together should continue. This could include organising a celebration event to explain the process and share some of the results of the programme with a wider audience.

Creative Schools Partnership should consider how to give a higher priority to the artistic development of the artists employed. This could include earmarking a small part of the budget for artists to attend individual or shared CPD.

Creative Schools Partnership should remind schools of the value of visits to arts or community venues.

The application process should be replaced by a multi-year partnership contract.

The Programme Manager should be retained.

The evaluation should be repeated next June.

Appendix One: Interviewees

	Head	Lead Teacher	Artist
Ashfield Girls	Louise Hanvey	Sam Fitzpatrick	Christina Nelson
Belfast Model for Boys	Dawn Farquhar	Conor McManus & Julia Brown	Sarah Lawrence Mark Devenport
Belfast Model for Girls	Paula Stuart	Nick McIlhatton	Jazzmin McClure Liam B de Frinse
Blessed Trinity		Eoin Fitzpatrick Gilah McCarroll	Sheena Kelly Graham Ginty Sean O'Neill Kwa Daniels
Lisneal College	Michael Allen	Michelle Lake	Andrew Tinney Laura Douglas Jonathan Burgess
Malone	Katrina Moore	Lynsay Mercer	Kerrie Hanna
Mercy College	Martin Moreland	Andrea Fryers	Karen Kinghan
St Cecillas		Tanya Wakeley	Ayeshya Mailey Graham Ginty Kwa Daniels
St Colms	Adrian Walsh	Ursula Mackel	Graham Ginty Kwa Daniels P Meir?
St Josephs	Fiona Harrigan & Ciara Deane	Margaret Ross & Shauna Cassidy	Louis Field, Dan Ferguson
St Vincent's	Brona Donegan	Kathy Brown	Annmarie Robinson Robert Crawford

Appendix Two: 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.

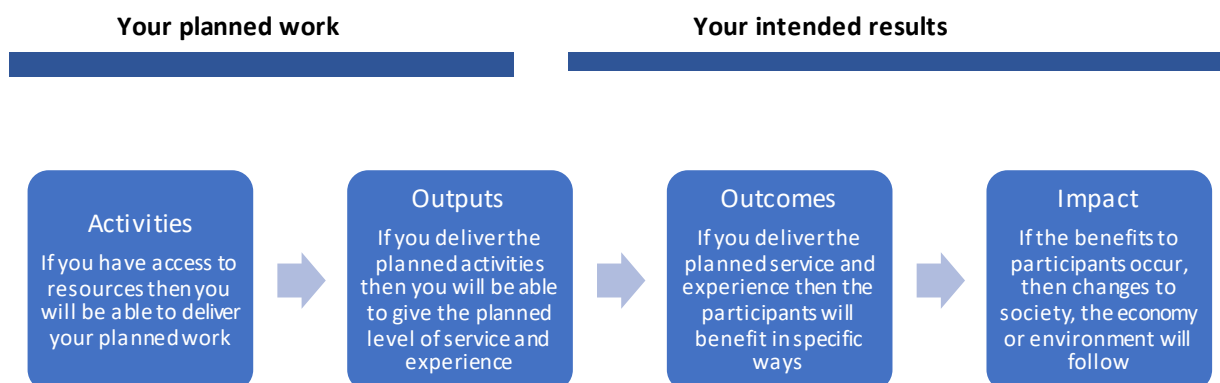
It is common for arts organisations and others to equate evaluation with Systems (methods) and not plan for the other crucial elements of the system.

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. 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 graphically and so illustrates the time lag between short-term 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/or the environment.

Logic model

This is a logic model for the Creative Schools Partnership programme, adjusted for phase two, which has a greater focus on community impact:

Activities	Outputs	Short Term Outcomes	Longer term Outcomes	Impact
Workshops Trips/visits Showcases/exhibitions Teacher CPD Sharing events	Number of schools (target 10-13) Number of workshops and contact hours Number and profile of students taking part Artworks	Students enjoy the project, increase their confidence, self-esteem and motivation, develop their communication, literacy and team-working skills, increase their wellbeing, and increase their interest in learning and the arts Schools support their school development priorities e.g., strengthen their connection with the community, foster positive community identities, and learn about creative approaches to learning	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 learning in their school development plans	Contribution to increased community cohesion, wellbeing and aspiration

ASSUMPTIONS:

Schools in disadvantaged areas have an increased need to apply creative learning approaches.

Artists have unique insights and processes that can support schools' development of creative learning.

Creative learning increases the chance that schools can cater for the different learning styles, skills and aspirations of every child.

Outcomes are higher where artistic quality is higher.

Each Creative Schools Partnership project connects to the overall programme objectives. I have given the individual logic models below so that you can see the special features of each school that contribute to the overall vision and impact.