

Brighton & Hove, Surrey and West Sussex Change Schools Programme 2009-11

Creative Partnerships is England's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills and aspirations of children across the country. In October 2009 five secondary schools joined the intensive Change Schools programme, complementing ongoing Change School activity in East Sussex.

This programme, brokered by Creative Agents, supports creative professionals and teachers to work towards whole school change. The ambitions of this diverse group of schools were high and the outcomes impressive, if occasionally unexpected. The combined experience, expertise and energy of the settings, and their partners, created a powerful learning community which fed the process throughout.



Longhill High School, Brighton & Hove

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Focus:

- How can we enhance student engagement, enjoyment and participation through creative learning?

Longhill took a broad approach in pursuing this question in the first year of the programme with three project strands, involving staff across D&T, ICT, Art and Humanities departments.

Students in Year 7 and 8 worked alongside teachers and creative consultants 'Excite' to develop the 'Opening Minds' curriculum, co-writing schemes of work and developing self-assessment tools. Gifted and talented students in Year 9 and 10 focused on independent learning, working

with multimedia specialist Karen O'Brien, they looked at how to improve student-led communication in the school. In the final strand sculptor, David Parfitt, focused on the physical environment of the school, working with some of the school's most disaffected students to take a lead on making changes to the external environment through a design challenge.

With support from the Headteacher, this final strand developed into a curating project. Display boards were removed from the school corridors and replaced with 800 frames. Inspired by a visit to Fabrica gallery, students set the brief for the use of these frames. They wanted to inspire learning and enrich classroom experiences through making random image connections – rather than opting for curriculum based content.

“Regular visitors to the school have commented upon the transformation in the premises and mood within it.” Headteacher

Impacts

- The long term sustainability of the projects has been safeguarded. Peer learning is now integrated into blog/ magazine, radio and curating projects
- Students engage more positively with the school's physical environment. Vandalism and littering now reduced to a level that enables maintenance staff to be more productively redeployed
- Staff have integrated creative approaches to learning. The head of the school's specialism now acts as an advocate for creative learning and curatorial skills are to be disseminated to all staff through CPD sessions



Longhill High School, Brighton & Hove

Shoreham Academy, West Sussex



Shoreham Academy, West Sussex

Focus:

- **Literacy has been the focus throughout the Change Schools programme at Shoreham Academy**

In the first year of their programme, the 250 students in Year 9 worked with creative practitioners within their newly formed vertical tutor groups, named after literary figures. Visual artist, Ryan Laight worked with Kipling to develop storyboards and animations based on 'The Jungle Book'. Another group developed murder mysteries and role-plays based on Conan Doyle thrillers with artist and performer Rebecca Garland and radio producer James Crawford guided Wells group in making broadcasts inspired by 'The War of the Worlds'.

The second year took a more in-depth approach working with a mixed group of 32 Year 8 students de-selected from taking a modern foreign language option due to their literacy levels. Students worked with urban music practitioners Max Wheeler and Dan Rodgers, and graffiti artist Neil Parkinson.

The achievements were 'phenomenal' given the extremely low levels of engagement and confidence among the participants at the outset. Success is attributed to the skill and strength of partnership between teachers, practitioners and creative agent, which enabled a flexible, reflective approach in supporting the young people to achieve.

“Personally I have learnt to think outside the box and I have been encouraged to try new activities to enhance the learning of English. I have also learnt how to challenge the dynamics in a group of mainly boys and very withdrawn girls.” School CP Coordinator

Impacts

- Confidence and behaviour has increased dramatically and students have better relationships with adults eg: a young girl who was an elective mute recorded two songs
- Noticeable attitudinal change among staff who’ve seen students, previously ‘unable’ to learn, teaching peers new skills
- English department now incorporates creative approaches in lessons – one teacher is using the newly acquired skills for her MA in Education



Thomas Knyvett College, Surrey

Focus:

- **Identity and engagement have been themes throughout the work at Thomas Knyvett College; a setting which had been through a series of name changes and has worked successfully to improve results and reputation**

Working with filmmaker Sasha Hoare, students looked at schools past and present, as well as their own. They found a good deal to be proud of and a series of interesting films were produced by various groups including those with English as an Additional Language (EAL), previously disengaged students and gifted and talented. Enthusiasm around this work led to a hugely successful film premiere organised by students, working with practitioner, Andrew Edmeads. It built the profile of the programme and more importantly lit the touch paper for greater student leadership.

The second year challenged 100 Year 8 students to work with celebratory arts company Same Sky and teachers from the

art and design faculty to transform the Year 7 playground - the ‘breathing space’ project. Practitioners worked with students eliciting, developing and realising with them their ideas to transform the space. These include a Keith Haring style mural incorporating a climbing wall, a talent stage which backs on to the music room, a mosaic bench chill out space, a series decorated laminates, painted panels and withy sculptures and flags.

“Year 9s will greet new Year 7s and explain: this is what we’ve done for you, where do you want to take it now?” School CP Coordinator

Impacts

- Students have recognised their own potential and been taken seriously - they are now less worried if things are right or wrong and ‘go with it’
- Teachers have amended work plans to incorporate a more fluid style and encourage more independent and group work, which has improved significantly
- Confidence and commitment of staff to continue to work with external creative partners - filmmaker is back in school to work with students on an ‘open brief’



Varndean School, Brighton & Hove

Focus:

- **How does Varndean reflect on, make evident and celebrate creativity taking place in the school?**
- **What is the point of learning about design and technology? Where does it lead me?**

The first year had two projects: a young curators programme supported by Anna Dimitriou which developed into a celebratory event; and a student-led film, involving Years 7, 8 and 9, focussed on capturing teaching and learning practices within enrichment sessions and day to day lessons, facilitated by filmmaker Jamie Taylor.

The school's technology specialism was the starting point in year two. Gifted and talented students from Year 9 worked with school staff and practitioner Mark Robertson to organise a 'Creative Careers' day for the whole of Year 8. The event was entirely student-led. They wrote press releases, developed branding and produced delegate packs. It brought together 27 professionals from creative industries and other businesses for a series of workshops, networking and discussions designed in response to the question 'what's the point of learning D&T?'

A second project involved a small group of disengaged students in the design and build of an eco-sculpture, linked to the

Arts Award. With input from practitioner Ade Lovejoy and support from creative agent Julia Roberts, staff led the project which included a research trip to the CASS Sculpture Foundation at Goodwood.

"I found myself offering suggestions and being told 'No, no, no Miss, we know what we're doing, we're fine'... They pulled it off, it was amazing." Lead teacher

Impacts

- Greater staff awareness around creating a supportive context for student-led initiatives that cross curriculum areas and timetabled lesson structures
- Effectiveness of real-world learning, where students are 'anticipating problems, solving problems and getting a real sense of the logistics involved'
- Unanticipated levels of attainment for those involved in the Arts Award. Many were persistent non-attenders, none had ever completed a D&T project prior to this project. Eight teachers are now trained Arts Award Advisers





Weydon School, Surrey

Focus:

- **To develop creative use of new technology**
- **To find out more about what truly engages young people and staff in collaborative work**

At the start the school had a new but underused media suite and a ban on mobile phones. Working with practitioners Steve Wallis, Ady Griffiths and Jason Keenan-Smith and led by the Deputy Head over the two years, the programme of work brought this technology to the heart of learning, permanently changing practice.

Creative experimentation with handheld technology took place initially with disengaged boys, and gifted and talented students. Through close collaboration with staff it was then taken into History, Geography, Drama, Maths, Science and English lessons.

iPhones were used as an assessment for learning, as video/photo/audio devices, to access apps for starters and plenaries, and to initiate group texting with iWall software. The practice was distilled into 'nuggets' and disseminated to staff. Technology champions in school are now supporting other staff in adopting the practice. Work was celebrated at an 'iPhone Oscar Night' ceremony.

The Mac suite project focussed on the English department working with Year 10 disaffected students' anthology text, bringing it to life with media through the use of Keynote software.

"The quality of the work produced by the creative practitioner and the students has been inspiring." School CP Coordinator

Impacts

- Research showed creative sessions encouraged a higher % of speaking, with the biggest increase in History eg: a session about Nazi Germany where traditionally the class would have spoken 10% of the lesson, with the iPhone rose to 80%
- Work tested students' ability to self-direct and work to an open ended brief and highlighted their appetite for greater involvement in the classroom aspects of learning
- The school is establishing creative teaching at the heart of its development plan, supporting teachers to consider the best ways to encourage more creative open tasks, broadening engagement in the classroom



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