

Creative Partnerships, Sussex and Surrey

# Brighton & Hove

## Enquiry Schools Programme 2008-09

**Creative Partnerships is the government's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills and aspirations of children across England. In September 2008, ten schools in Brighton and Hove were selected to begin the new year-long Enquiry Schools Programme and were offered the opportunity to work with a creative professional to explore a chosen area of creative learning. The range of ideas and themes was impressive and their stories are summarised here.**

### **Balfour Junior School**

**How can creative techniques be used and impact on the teaching, learning and attainment of maths across year 4?**

Working in partnership with *Kevin Holland* from *Bigfoot Theatre*, Year 4 used 'The Mantle of the Expert' approach, an approach that involves pupils becoming experts in a particular field. In this case, each group set up a company to respond to a brief. Pupils had to help save fictional Bubblegum TV Company by coming up with new ideas for a TV programme that would interest children and have a maths focus. Each group had a real say in what was going on and developed very different approaches, processes and answers to the same brief. Kevin and the teachers worked 'in character' with each group.

The project evidenced striking effects on pupil attainment, motivation and confidence and their ability to work collaboratively. The most significant progress was in the 'core' (average ability group) where a substantial amount of the group made outstanding progress - some children even making a whole level of progress in one term. For staff the project offered significant professional development opportunities.

## Blatchington Mill School

Through the process of making of a documentary, how can students:

- engage with decision making
- share knowledge with and involve older members of the community?

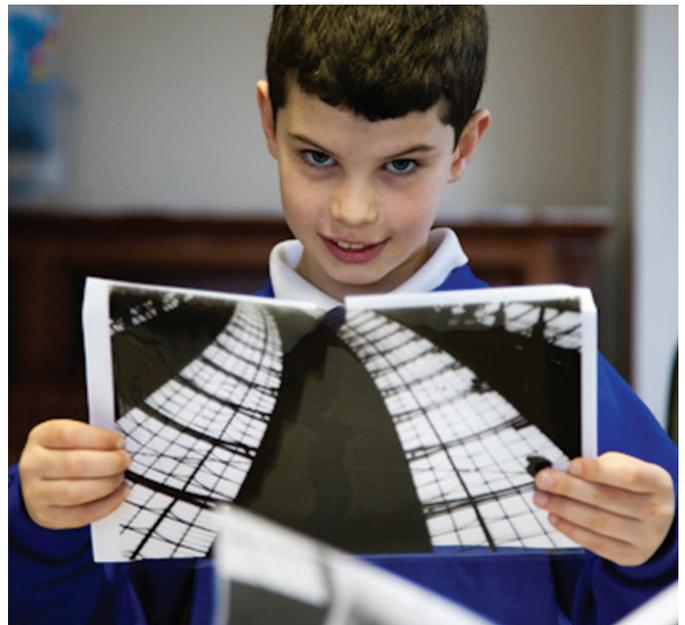
Blatchington Mill School aimed to develop a digital media project with students, teachers and *Junk TV* (Simon Wilkinson) to create a documentary for broadcast on the school's new TV channel which would involve older people in the community. Young people from Year 8 chose to make a gonzo style documentary (which blends reality and fiction) investigating food at school, past and present. In the process they developed skills in journalism, editing and filming. The enquiry looked at how the media of film can contribute to students' learning as well as developing the way they worked together as a group.

Unexpected outcomes included quieter members of the group gaining a deep interest in filmmaking and becoming more confident and young people learning to challenge older generation stereotypes. By giving themselves the freedom to open up the original brief, the students, teacher and practitioner were able to take themselves on a more creative journey in terms of their learning, to take risks with their thinking. The project offered the students genuine opportunities to have their voice heard and to make a positive contribution to the school and the wider community.

## Cottesmore St Mary's Catholic School

**How can creativity be used to extend mathematical enquiry skills within gifted mathematicians in Year 5?**

Visual artist, *Angela Carter* worked with a small group of gifted and talented students from Year 5 and their teachers to make links between maths and art. Keen to develop use of the school's immediate environment as a learning resource they made visits to Brighton Station, the Foredown Tower and other local sites. Pupils made extensive use of journals to document and explore their ideas, ideas which were developed further in school making wire drawings, using projections, photography, collage and plaster. Each of these activities furthered children's understanding of the maths and science that underpins the world around them. Children developed confidence and more sophisticated



thinking. The artist is now working with teachers and children to create a Year 5 pilot module as the legacy for the school with children who participated in this project acting as mentors for other children.

## Longhill High School

**How can the school's environment be used to create a sense of community and to encourage students to feel they are agents of change within the institution?**

The enquiry aimed to raise the impact of student voice in the school through involving students in a major school building development. Working in collaboration with sculptor, *Will Nash*, local authority architects and Conran & Partners, students explored the ways in which they could influence the new build.

A core group of Year 8 and Year 10 students took part in a session at the University of Brighton's Creativity Centre and participated in practical activities which examined the principles and possibilities of architecture and how they might apply their creativity to test its boundaries. This group then devised ways to involve the wider school community. This included setting up a blog and an online poll, the results of which were used to inform a two day series of In(ter)ventions in which all Year 8 students participated.

Over these two days students were involved in designing seating structures using 500 cardboard boxes, working on large scale wall mounted paintings of seagulls and building geodesic domes as prototype social spaces or shelters. The project culminated with an exhibition in June 2009 at the offices of Conran & Partners in Brighton.

## Middle Street Primary School

**How can enhancing the children's creative expression and that of the adults around them by developing their speaking and listening skills, impact on learning, making it more meaningful and enjoyable?**

*Catherine Grimaldi*, illustrator and book artist, explored story-building and textiles in a child centred approach to develop and extend the KS1 deep learning topic of 'farms'. The 'yolk' of the project was to explore the child's voice in developing speaking and listening skills through taking stories from the 'book form' into the child's world, the space of the classroom and beyond. Children created their own shadow puppets and devised ingenious ways of lighting and scripting their pieces.



All 90 children in KS1 were involved together with three teachers and teaching assistants/parents. Children were seen to have made improvements in speaking and listening skills and this had a beneficial effect on their literacy skills as evidenced in their story-telling and in the recording of their stories in both drawings and writing - "I used not to be able to write but now I can write", "books are more interesting than playing". Noticeable impacts were also seen in a group of boys in Year 2 who had been 'hard to engage' previously.

## Patcham House School

**How can we use performing and media arts with Year 9 to impact on their behaviour as collaborators and communicators?**

At Patcham House School, a secondary special needs school, behaviour is an issue for most students and Year 9 were identified as having particular problems in working together collaboratively. They wanted to find out if working creatively would have a positive impact on behaviour.

The project was led entirely by the ideas and opinions of the young people. Students agreed that they wanted to focus on making a film about dogs – a common interest that they shared. *David Parker*, a visual artist from Figment Arts, worked with the group to enable them to explore ways of using film and photography, devising a campaign to raise awareness for the RSPCA with an underlying aim to enhance collaboration and communication between students. They collectively created a series of clay animation films and an historical live action drama filmed at Stanmer House. They have also put material together into a book to raise funds for the RSPCA. The project culminated in an exhibition at Jubilee Library. Students were overwhelmingly positive about their experience, one student describing a day as "the best ever".

## Patcham Junior School

**Can implementing 'communities of enquiry' develop pupils' confidence in speaking and listening, mutual trust, enhance their higher order thinking skills and impact on collaborative learning?**

Year 5 children worked in small groups with their teacher and practitioner *Judy Grahame* to identify and research collaboratively particular aspects of life in Ancient Greece. The focus for the work was that each group would produce a short presentation which they would share with the rest of the class. This was ultimately filmed with support from Patcham High School.

Through focusing on higher order thinking skills and adopting a 'communities of enquiry' approach, teacher, practitioner and learners all noticed improvements and developments in communication skills, comparative thinking and learning skills. The teacher had also learned a new approach and felt empowered to "teach less" and "hand over the keys to the learning kingdom". Pupil comments included: "It was difficult at first but now I realise I can work with anyone not just my friends". They were given good opportunities to make their own decisions and guide their own learning and became more confident, mature and motivated in their approach.

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## St Andrew's C.E. (Aided) Primary School

### How can we use drama and filmmaking to improve creative teaching and learning and to encourage a buddy system between Reception and Year 6?

Teachers wanted to understand how drama and film can be used as a process and as a language for communication rather than simply an end product. Through this they wanted children to explore more creative ways of communication.

The project involved one Year 6 class and one Reception class working in two groups to research and share learning about the Brighton Pavilion. *Kevin Holland (Bigfoot Theatre)* and *Paul Dutton (Junk TV)* worked on developing children's skills and confidence and supported them in deciding which aspect of the Pavilion to explore further.

The final activity involved each group teaching the other, using drama and film as the language of communication. The focus of the Pavilion and Brighton gave the opportunity for the school to look at how this process and intervention can be used and adapted to inform future literacy, art and history schemes of work.

## St Luke's Junior School

### How can a school enhance a sense of belonging in its pupils?

*Sam Lebihan (dancer/choreographer)* and *Cath Bristow (textile artist/printmaker)* worked with a class of Year 3 pupils and their teacher to investigate the concept of belonging through dance and art. The enquiry changed considerably in the planning process, moving from an initial product focus to a much more process oriented approach.

At the core of the project was the 'Campsite' idea. A simple model of the school and its grounds was set up in the classroom. Each child designed their own tent and decided where to put it, depending on how much they felt they belonged to the school –

the more they felt they belonged, the closer they put their tent to the school building. As the weeks progressed they were encouraged to re-evaluate their sense of belonging through moving their tent and adding to the model.

The project culminated in a final celebration event where other Year 3 classes, teachers and parents shared the learning and an exhibition of artwork and choreographed dance performance. Through working collaboratively on the project, pupils grew in self-confidence and the school is now looking at having a non-curriculum based creative space for children in the classroom.

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## Somerhill Junior School

### How can we harness our children's passion for environmental issues, working creatively in order to develop their communication and collaborative learning skills?

Working with practitioners *James Greyson* (environmental think tank) and *Keith Ellis* (Moving Sounds) the school hoped to build on high levels of interest in environmental issues to develop children's collaboration and communication skills. At the core of the project was the Green Team of 24 children with a wider circle of pupils also involved. The project aimed to explore the exciting, crossover areas where art and science meet and fertilise each other, and to provide real opportunities for children to 'make a difference' as creative thinkers, scientists and environmental campaigners.

More than 60 children drawn from across the school undertook an environmental 'campaign', culminating in a high-profile, community performing arts event in early April. A crucial role early on was the 'think tank' which worked with James Greyson to develop a series of powerful and searching survey questions aimed at identifying barriers to 'being green' amongst the adults in the school and wider community, and to establish the exact focus for the campaign. The Ecomania event on 1 April began a series of events designed to create maximum public interest and impact, both within school and also within Brighton and Hove.

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