

East Sussex Change Schools Programme 2008-11

Creative Partnerships is England's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills and aspirations of children and young people.

From September 2008 to July 2011, fifteen educational settings (early years, primary and secondary) participated in Creative Partnerships' Change Schools programme. Over three years, the programme supported partnerships between creative professionals, teachers and young people with the aim to bring about whole school change in relation to creativity and learning. Each setting focused on chosen areas of investigative enquiry to act as a bedrock for the work. The journeys and outcomes for those involved are summarised here.

Early Years



Hastings and St Leonards Children's Centres

Hastings and St Leonards Children's Centres

Focus:

- **To develop creative approaches for early years practitioners, focusing on a 'Reggio Emilia'¹ inspired methodology; to implement these across a broad spectrum of settings over three years and increase visibility of this work in the local community**

An important aspect of the three year programme was the keen observation of children's exploratory play to ensure that creative learning activity was led by their developing interests. Each block of artist's

¹ The Reggio Emilia approach to education is committed to the creation of a learning environment that will enhance and facilitate children's construction of his or her own powers of thinking through the combination of all the expressive, communicative and cognitive languages. See <http://www.reggioemiliaapproach.net>

time allowed for planning and evaluation as well as face-to-face work, so that the needs of each centre's children and staff were built in to the practice of the partnerships. Jane Gordon, a visual artist experienced in the Reggio Emilia approach, worked as lead practitioner over the three years.

The distance travelled was phenomenal; by the final year, the approaches piloted in years one and two were being rolled out by a team of ten local artists to a staggering twenty settings across Hastings and St Leonard's. *"If this is not one of the most successful CP projects in the Country I would be very surprised"* cites the programme manager, *"It has been brilliantly conceived and run."* The outcomes were beyond the wildest dreams of anyone involved; to have an estimated 600 children, 60 practitioners, 20 settings, 10 artists and over 1000 parents involved in the programme, was a huge achievement.

Outcomes:

- Of 20 settings in the final year, 37% scored themselves 4 or 5 on a 5 point scale, in terms of confidence to take risks. This increased to 100% after the project's completion
- The artists involved have set up a new Early Years Artists Collective in Hastings
- A film to support creative approaches to early years work has been made in partnership with East Sussex County Council

Rother Children's Centres



Rother Children's Centres

Focus

- **To enhance speech, language and communication through creative approaches to early years practice**
- **To develop stronger links between parents and the wider community to create a positive model of practice and set a solid legacy**

In the first year creative practitioner Alex Sutton-Vane worked with children and staff at Sidley Nursery to develop the use of visual arts and music as stimuli for creative learning.

The project focus in year two shifted to outdoor learning with activities based around 'the little house' in the grounds. These were designed to encourage parents and carers to play and create with their children. In addition, organised trips and regular visits were made to the local woods with parents and other early years settings in the immediate community.

Development of speech and language skills was still a key priority during the programme's final year, with music making providing a key focus in strengthening these skills. Project activity expanded to involve three other early years groups, in order to build on the relationship between settings and improve wider community links.

Links were also made with Bexhill College's Performing Arts department to develop an accredited work placement in an Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) setting for their first year National Diploma Level students. This was a practical hands-on placement where students developed and led activities for young children and were mentored by the lead creative practitioners at Sidley Nursery.

Outcomes:

- A strong network of partnerships between early years settings established to embed creative learning approaches around enhancing speech and language

- Parents and carers significantly more confident and willing to get involved in activities with their children in the children's centre
- Children's confidence and communication skills grew throughout as they engaged with a wide range of new adults as positive role models

Primary



Churchwood Community Primary School

Churchwood Community Primary School

Focus

- **To use creative approaches to learning to explore Personal and Social Education (PSE) issues, developing community cohesion, both within and beyond the school**

The first and second year of the programme saw successful strategies employing drama as a medium for learning. Drama specialist Toni Gardener concentrated on using 'Forum Theatre'² techniques in which children learnt to explore real life problems via drama. This approach linked with aspects of the School's SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) policy and its emotional literacy curriculum. The 'Forum' method also supported the school's policy on pupil voice. By the third year of the programme, the school broadened out their enquiry to

investigate how music could be employed to reach out to a selection of pupils for whom the school were keen to improve attendance and behaviour, as well as reaching out to engage the wider community.

They worked with musician Robin Macgregor whose practice included making experimental sound compositions. Their work drew on rhythms, sounds and words from different styles of music, including pupil's own musical preferences. Pupils collaborated with Robin, to devise and lead the creative process. They formed a music group with their teachers and parents, exploring the possibilities for music being a cohesive influence in the community.

Outcomes:

- A clear sense of pupils' growing confidence to work as co-constructors of learning
- A whole school commitment to using drama and music as a cross-curricular medium for creative learning
- Staff confidence has grown in using Forum theatre techniques to address behavioural issues

Polegate School

Focus

- **To 'Push the Boundaries' for delivering a creative, skills-based curriculum and raise standards of writing through creative approaches**

From the outset, Polegate wanted their creative practitioner, puppeteer Isobel Smith, to challenge them to think in new ways. Isobel worked with them over three years helping them 'push boundaries' and supporting the extension of the school's 'deep learning' curriculum, which has creativity at its centre.

The first two years of the project built a solid foundation of trust and good relationships with Isobel working closely with teachers and children from all year groups. Isobel's role was to constructively challenge staff and devise innovative experiences to refocus

² Forum Theatre is an interactive style of theatre that enables participants to explore challenging aspects of their lives, motivating them to make positive change. The name is taken from the style of theatre created by the innovative and influential practitioner Augustus Boal.



them creatively. In the final year musician Daniel Marcus Clark worked with Isobel to broaden the school's experience of creative learning through puppetry to include music. Working across the curriculum with children and teachers, Daniel sought to expand the possibilities of creative teaching and learning by creating a new form of musical annotation and by developing music scores and compositions as soundtracks to stories.

The value the school now places on partnership working is exemplified by their continued commitment to work with Isobel and other creative professionals, as they move further in their journey to push the boundaries of what is possible with creative learning.

Outcomes:

- Clear improvements in children's attention to detail, multi-tasking, manipulation of materials, decision making and working co-operatively (as evidenced in the 'professional' pupil-led design team that manufactured sets for the end of year show)
- Children reflected on their learning process, reporting on their increased enjoyment in tackling difficult tasks
- The school has developed a genuine, whole school practice based on creative approaches to learning which has led to innovation at the heart of the curriculum

Sandown Primary School

Focus

- **To investigate creative approaches to developing a skills-based curriculum**

In the first two years, activity centred on building teachers' confidence in using the school's extensive grounds as a site for learning. They worked closely with artists Len Shelley, Debbie Antonowicz and Jill Parsons, to develop new approaches and integrate these into the design and delivery of the curriculum. Activities ranged from opening up overgrown areas as a stimulus for children's imagination to using recycled materials to make new sculptures in the grounds.

The final phase of the programme concentrated on integrating creative approaches into whole school curriculum planning, with specific focus on two strands from the school's strategic planner, 'Enjoying Reading and Writing' and 'Inspiring Teaching and Learning'. To achieve this, the children, teachers and practitioners looked at 'quality texts', to see how they could be brought alive and provide a rich experience that can be the basis for investigating work in all areas of the curriculum. One particularly successful approach was 'Mantle of the Expert'³, introduced by drama practitioner, Kevin Holland.



Sandown Primary School

³ Mantle of the Expert is a dramatic enquiry based approach to teaching and learning in which the class do all of their curriculum work as if they are an imagined group of experts.

Outcomes:

- Building on each year's practice and working in consecutive year groups, skills developed at the start of the programme were being used across the curriculum at the end of the three years
- Successful integration of creative practitioners into the life of the school achieved through sound planning and evaluation routines
- 50% of school staff are now developing and leading a rolling programme of themed enquiry projects, funded by financial commitment from the school

Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School

Focus

- **To use creative approaches to involving children in curriculum development**

The focus on the first year was on using puppetry and storytelling to develop pupils' writing skills. Project activity was made visible through the development of dynamic displays of learning within the school - a strategy for children to chronicle learning as it happened so that the display boards could be used as ongoing resources for reflection.

In year two the focus moved to transition from primary to secondary school, with pupils in Year 6 working with filmmaker Fiona Adams to document their investigations into this key moment of change in children's lives. The final year's project was firmly aimed at developing pupil voice in the curriculum. An outdoor creative learning area - a place to encourage imaginative and creative thinking for both staff and children - was developed in the school grounds. Artists Ryan Laight and Martin Brockman worked closely with pupils to design and develop the space. They thought carefully about what they would like to do in the area, finally developing a flexible space using poles and canvas to construct different kinds of spaces depending on the activity. Through cross-phase working, the project involved whole school engagement in its planning and delivery.

Outcomes:

- The design and build of the outdoor learning area has left a legacy of opportunities for other children to contribute to developing it in the future
- The development of staff skills in creative approaches to the curriculum
- Devising policy and practice for transition from primary to secondary school



Sedlescombe Church of England Primary School

Shinewater Primary School

Focus

- **To use drama and storytelling to re-engage children in learning, extend their language, and motivate them to write**

The significant aspect of the Creative Partnerships work at Shinewater has been the retention of the same two practitioners - storyteller Kevin Graal and drama practitioner Toni Gardener - for the three years of the programme. The practitioners had a clear role in supporting literacy through devising face-to-face work in partnership with teachers and parents, and providing CPD sessions for staff. This consistency allowed the project to build incrementally, so that it came to influence teaching and learning across the school. The aim of the work has been to give children exciting and motivating experiences that they want to write about.

The school had an Ofsted inspection in June 2010 when it was deemed to be 'outstanding'.

Having observed a lesson which involved partnership working with the practitioners, the inspectors commented on the positive effect of the Creative Partnerships work. The Headteacher is clear that Creative Partnerships has contributed a great deal to the quality of teaching and learning in the school. There is evident success in terms of the progress made by the children, particularly those who had previously lacked the motivation to write at all. Through genuine partnership working between practitioners, teachers and children, this three year programme has successfully integrated creative approaches to literacy into whole school practice.

Outcomes:

- Levelled writing assessment of pupils' work demonstrated improvements in levels of writing beyond expectation. On average pupils are expected to progress two sub levels each year, with this project they were achieving two sub levels per term
- Engagement, enjoyment and motivation of pupils increased across the whole school
- Creative Partnerships programme has underpinned an important transition in the way the school delivers the curriculum



St Mary Star of the Sea Roman Catholic Primary School

Focus

- **To develop creative approaches to learning, and the involvement of children's voice in curriculum development**

St Mary's endeavoured to see all children in the school involved in Creative Partnerships activity each year. In the first year, visual artist Carol Havard worked in each class to develop new skills and ways of using art to support teaching and learning. In year two dancer Sarah Alexander worked with each class to produce dance pieces based on their maths curriculum such as Fibonacci sequence, computation and area. This proved to be inspirational for both children and staff, and the legacy of Sarah's work remains with the school to this day. In a concurrent project, landscape gardener Karen Wydler worked with children in Years 1 and 2 to develop ideas for the school's outdoor space, a project once again rich in legacy potential, as it led to community and business involvement in the building of the space.

For the final year, there was a continued emphasis on adopting creative approaches



to teaching and learning, with a focus on the development of writing. The activity ranged from Joseph Coelho's work in engaging the boys in literacy through playwriting, storytelling and poetry, to David Richards' and David Parkers' work exploring story boards, writing scripts and making films based on the action book, 'Traction Man'. A group of pupil researchers monitored and evaluated each project, with the outcomes being fed back to the school staff.

Outcomes:

- Creativity and pupil voice are now a fundamental part of school planning
- The school is confident now to source and employ freelance practitioners, and plans to do so in the future
- There will be three themed enquiry weeks throughout the next academic year using the Creative Partnerships model

West St Leonards Community Primary School

Focus

- **To develop creative approaches to cross-curricular work**

West St Leonards' approach to the Change Schools programme built year on year in ambition, numbers and impact. The focus in the first year was to develop creative approaches to cross curricular work in the foundation stage of the school. In the second year, there was a greater focus on teachers devising creative approaches to



West St Leonards Community Primary School

cross-curricular work, with dance specialist Anne Colvin and artist Len Shelley working with teachers from a broader range of year groups.

In the third year, children's voice in curriculum development became the focus, with a group of KS2 pupils working in full partnership with teachers and creative practitioners – whose expertise were in drama, crafts and media – to plan, deliver and evaluate a project for Year 1 pupils. The project theme, based around stories and storytelling, came from KS2 suggestions. The KS2 team took responsibility for working alongside the drama and craft practitioners, supporting activities for the younger children. This included reporting early to the practitioners on each project day to be briefed about the activities and timetable and, where necessary, learn a new skill from the craft practitioner so they could support the younger children.

Outcomes:

- There is an increased confidence amongst staff to take on creative approaches to teaching
- A growing participation of children in the development of the curriculum
- Demonstrated ability of more able KS2 children to collaborate together and nurture younger children

Secondary Schools

Bexhill High School

Focus

- **To investigate the creative potential of learning environments**

As they embarked on the programme, Bexhill High was preparing to move into a new, state-of-the-art school where KS3 learning was planned to take place in learning pods each accommodating 90 students. The school used the programme to investigate the creative potential of the new learning environments, focusing on a curriculum area



called 'Discoveries', a cross-curricular faculty comprising maths, science and technology.

In year one of the programme, they developed 'The Green Room' – an exploration of how engaging aspects of outdoor learning could be transferred into the classroom. In year two, an ambitious project saw pupils investigating spaces for creative learning in preparation for moving into the new school building.

With their move into the new school, they asked, 'How can we model creative behaviours in the learning pods, and evidence students' learning outcomes in 'Discoveries' through creative activities?'. Three creative practitioners – a product designer, an artist/structural engineer and an environmental journalist, worked with 12 Discoveries teachers (science, technology and maths specialists) and 300 Year 7 students to plan and deliver a project based on the idea of a space mission to explore other planets. The resulting project, SpaceLab 2011, culminated in an interactive sharing event where over 300 hundred parents, family members, staff and other community members, experienced the students' learning journeys through the shared exploration of the 'living installation' of the SpaceLab.

Outcomes:

- Foundations laid for experimental approaches to creative learning in the new school environment, particularly in relation to effective team working in the pods
- Teachers are especially positive about the impact of involving students in the planning of large scale curriculum focused events

- Plans to share practice through CPD, and to work with creative practitioners in the future to introduce similar models of creative learning in other faculties

Helenswood School

Focus

- **To encourage pupils' active involvement in their learning**
- **To develop thinking within the school community about creative teaching and learning**

The first year of the programme focused on creative approaches to learning outside the classroom. In year two a representative cross section of pupils from Years 7 to 10 conducted a research and development phase to understand staff and pupils' experiences of teaching and learning. This cross-phase approach to their enquiry continued with a 'Newsroom' project run in partnership with photographer Alex Brattell, journalist Jane Hughes and graphic designers, Playne Design. Tutor groups contributed to an e-newspaper aimed at community cohesion - a copy of which is now on display in No. 10 Downing Street!

The final phase of the programme drew on primary teaching expertise to develop a creative KS3 curriculum that supported transition, inclusion and collaboration. Again, the preparatory work was thorough, with staff visits to local primary schools to observe teaching practice and sessions with specialist primary advisers to develop and pilot an integrated curriculum to Year 7 learning.



Helenswood School

This final year's work got to the heart of change in the school through developing a meaningful dialogue between teachers and pupils, modelling collaborative practice between staff and external partners.

Outcomes:

- Staff furthered their understanding of creative teaching and learning through practical project activity
- Practitioners proved to be inspiring role models, opening up a wider understanding of career choices, and their creative skills have enabled the young people to produce high quality outcomes
- A commitment from the school to consolidate the work, with a fund set aside for the next financial year, for staff to make bids for projects that support the further development of creative teaching and learning



Ratton School

Ratton School

Focus

- **To develop skills based learning and transferable skills through cross-curricular projects**

In the first year Ratton explored the possibilities for cross curricular learning in two projects bringing together science and english and maths and art departments. This also involved an investigation of monitoring and assessing transferable skills through pupils' Personal, Learning and Thinking Skills (PLTS).

In the second year the aim was to involve staff from several departments to disseminate creative practices more widely, for example, developing a cross-phase (KS2-3) drama and Spanish language project working with Spanish speaking playwright Carmen Doltz to develop a play to take to feeder primaries.

The final phase of Ratton's project built on the success of this student led outreach, with older students teaching maths and languages to younger students. One partnership saw Graham Shackell, an artist specialising in circus skills, training students to use circus skills as a means to improving mathematical understanding.

Running parallel to this was a 'student researchers' project, which has initiated co-construction of learning at the school. The senior management team are excited about the future potential of the project on student voice, particularly with regards to earned autonomy (a form of independent learning), which is an increasingly important aspect of the school focus.

Outcomes:

- A determination to continue to develop aspects of drama to improve standards in the classroom
- A significant improvement in the understanding of PLTS in the school
- A significant impact on the teaching of foreign languages in the school

Rye College

Focus

- **How can carnival arts invigorate creative teaching and learning?**

Rye College created a dynamic and far-reaching three year programme by investigating how carnival arts can invigorate creative teaching and learning, through identifying transferable processes and skills for young people and staff. Each year the processes of planning, designing and making has culminated in a carnival event in Rye, creating young leaders, from Year 8 to Year 11, as advocates for legacy. The school



now has a model of best practice to maintain this energy, enthusiasm for creative teaching and learning.

The carnival work has created a great deal of autonomy for the young people involved – they raised £3,000 during their final year towards a legacy fund for the project. The college became part of the initiative ‘Create, Compete, Collaborate’ linked to the 2012 games and has linked with a school in France on work around the Paralympics. They are part of a UK wide participatory arts programme, ‘Imagination Our Nation’, linked to the 2012 Olympic ‘Inspire’ programme.

The degree to which this project continues to serve the community cohesion aims of the college can be seen in the possibility of Rye becoming a FairTrade town as a result of the Creative Partnerships work.

Outcomes:

- In a June 2010 Ofsted inspection, the college was rated as ‘good’, with an ‘outstanding’ for community cohesion. The headteacher is sure that this was, in large part, due to Creative Partnerships
- The carnival has strengthened the school’s profile and identity, as exemplified in the annual carnival event, marked by its inclusive approach and partnerships with the local community
- The project work led to international partnerships with a European shared performance programme in place and a global exchange based on FairTrade issues

William Parker Sports College

Focus

- **To develop incremental and sustainable, creative approaches to the KS3 curriculum, delivered in partnership with the wider school and local community**

This process was successfully piloted in year one, working with computer games designer Dax Ginn and the local fishing community to research, design and make ‘iFish’, a computer game based on the Hastings fishing industry. In year two the college worked on three projects, with the aim of widening school and community participation. One of these, ‘The names on the wall’ involved Year 9 students working with a local military historian to investigate the names on the two war memorials sited within the school grounds. This research fed into a Year 10 playwriting project with writer Grant Watson which resulted in ‘The Blood Run’. This collaboratively produced play was ‘workshopped’ by the students with a director from the National Theatre.

Through a portfolio of ambitious projects, the college continued to develop links with the wider community in the final phase of the programme. This included ‘The Creative Word’, a Year 7 literacy project, where the students collaborated with Martin Levinson, a local practitioner with an advertising background and the charity ‘Dragonflies’, who work with children who have suffered bereavement. Some of the students’ final work will be used by the charity to promote the ‘Dragonflies’ programme.



Outcomes:

- The film 'Last Letters Home' based on 'The Blood Run' is a 'living memorial' to the students who saw active service in the two World Wars, and will be screened as part of the school's annual remembrance service
- The college is committed to the implementation and development of the creative learning strategy that has resulted from their Creative Partnerships' work
- Funding has been ring fenced for creative learning projects for 2011/12 in order to further embed the momentum of the Creative Partnerships ethos within the school community



Willingdon Community School

Focus

- **To investigate the nature of creative learning with students and staff**

Musician Max Wheeler and filmmaker Nick Pilton worked with the school throughout the three year programme, building strong working relationships with the staff and students, and establishing a genuinely shared approach to collaborative learning and teaching.

In the first year the Creative Partnerships project contributed to the development of a shared language for creativity – demonstrated in the films and sound pieces created by students working with the practitioners. In the second year this initial focus was extended by having the two practitioners work across subject areas on a flexible basis, responding to teachers' specific teaching challenges. In the final year, the creative practitioners worked with a group of alienated students to develop creative approaches to engagement with schooling. At the core of this final year project was the attempt to change students' perceptions of school, and the teaching staff's perceptions of the cohort of students involved.

This final year saw all students canvassed, via the school's Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), as to the impact of the creative approaches introduced over the life of the Creative Partnerships programme. This will be ongoing, year on year, as a test of the effectiveness of creative approaches in the school.

Outcomes:

- The development of a clear understanding of creative learning, and the ability to reflect on this learning
- The integration of filmmaking and music production skills into a broad range of curriculum subjects has been crucial to the success of the programme
- A legacy has been secured through a lottery grant to invest in future project working

Practitioners that have worked with East Sussex Change Schools, 2008-2011

Hastings and St Leonards Children's Centres

Phil Bedford
Tom Cook
Ben Fairlight
Jane Gordon
Amanda Jobson
Becci Kenning
Kate Murdoch
Fiona Pienkowska
Tara Reddy
Jim Roseveare
Miranda Sharp
Deborah Sharpe
Sarah Yates

Rother Children's Centres

Toni Gardener
Alex Sutton-Vane

Churchwood Community Primary School

Lulu Allison
Toni Gardener
Leroy Henry
Robin Macgregor

Polegate School

Anita Makris
Daniel Marcus Clark
Isobel Smith

Sandown Primary School

Kevin Holland (Bigfoot Arts Education)
Len Shelley
Radiator Arts (Debbie Antonowicz,
Peter Quinnell and Jill Parsons)
Graeme Walker

Sedlescombe CofE Primary School

Fiona Adams
Polly Beestone
Martin Brockman
Helen Goss
Kevin Graal
Ryan Laight
Sheridan Quigley

Shinewater Primary School

Toni Gardener
Kevin Graal

St Mary Star of the Sea RC Primary School

Sarah Alexander
Ed Boxall
Joseph Coelho
Kerry Deacon
Kevin Graal
Carol Havard
David Parker
David Richards
Karen Wydler (Touchwood Trees)

West St Leonards Community Primary School

Anne Colvin
Kevin Graal
Graeme Kerr
Emma Lewis
Helen Pillot De Chenecey
Sheridan Quigley
Len Shelley

Bexhill High School

Johanna Berger and Blank Studios artists
(Cici Blumstein, Lulu Allison, Alan Thompson,
Christie Sarri)
Chantal Cooke
Kenton Lowe
Ivo Rousham

Helenswood School

Alex Brattell
Compulsive Productions
Jane Hughes
Playne Design
Room Outside (Annemarie O'Sullivan
and Tom McWalter)

Ratton School

Jim Byford
Carmen Doltz
Dinah Kelly
Cameron Mcallister
Will Nash
Graham Shackell

Rye College

Pat Bullock
Angela Carter
Rosaria Gracia
Nikki Gunson
Kinetika
Alex Mann
Jessie Martlehoff
Anthony Silker
Hazel Varah

William Parker Sports College

Geoff Bridges
Jethro Carr
Leigh Dyer
Dax Ginn
Martin Levinson
Grant Watson
Simon Wilkinson (Junk TV)

Willingdon Community School

Nick Pilton
Max Wheeler

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