

# Surrey

## Enquiry Schools Programme 2009-10

**Creative Partnerships is the government's flagship creative learning programme, designed to develop the skills and aspirations of children across England. In March 2009, twenty schools in Surrey were selected to begin the first year-long Enquiry School programme in the county. Each school was 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. We are grateful for the support of VT Four S and Surrey Arts in the delivery of this programme.**

### Primary Schools

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#### Cardinal Newman Catholic Primary School

**How can teachers and pupils develop the use of different media formats, such as photography, blogs, podcasts etc. that encourage the children to become more reflective learners?**

The school wanted to extend their confidence in using film and photography to provide a more creative approach to recording and reflecting. The school topic for Year 2 in the autumn term was 'global gardens' and working with film producer Lisa Gomer they used this as the focus for their research. Pupils visited Kew Gardens and documented their visit using Flip cameras; interviewing each other to record their experiences. They researched specific countries using film to record their findings. A DVD has been produced to capture the learning from the whole project. Outcomes include:

- Teachers learnt not to ask for perfection and how to use film technology in a simple way, appropriate in a primary school
- Pupils learnt to be spontaneous through their use of digital media, making 'rough and ready' films
- Pupils were able to take a lead in their own learning

## The Chandler C of E (Aided) Junior School

### What feeds curiosity; particularly in the outdoor environment?

Working with sculptor Ruth Wheeler the school wanted to explore how the energy of 'play' can be used in the formal curriculum, blurring informal 'play' with classroom learning. Pupils explored how an outdoor space might be used by taking part in design workshops, playing with objects and materials, making models, and making temporary structures. All of the school had ownership of the question through involvement of the school council and presentations in assembly. Finally, they worked on developing two outdoor play and learning spaces. Outcomes include:

- Teachers were able to share an understanding of creative consultation
- Pupils engaged positively with classroom learning following playtime
- Pupils learnt to value their environment

## Christ Church Church of England Infant School

### What helps to make an inspiring learning environment and how can this help support independent learning?

This enquiry looked at developing more stimulating learning environments which would support children's independent learning. Theatre designer and drama practitioner Rebecca Glover worked with the children to design a bespoke environment for the class. Rebecca worked with staff and pupils to develop their ideas through storytelling and mood boards to arrive at a final design. The children had real ownership of the space and took great pride in guiding others around it. Outcomes include:

- An informal learning space now exists which supports transition from Reception to the more formal learning in Year 1



Christ Church Church of England School

- Use of the space is now built into future curriculum plans
- Pupils clearly demonstrated greater excitement, enthusiasm, confidence and a willingness to work independently

## Earlswood Infant and Nursery School

### How can the skills required for scientific enquiry be transferred to all learning?

Working with architect Alan Thompson pupils and teachers in Year 2 began by looking at the elements and conducting mini experiments to understand more about the rain, sun and wind. Pupils made short animations, rain collectors and weather vanes. The project culminated in building a weather station that was designed by children and informed by research into other designs and models. The pupils reported back each week to the rest of the school. Other pupils worked alongside taking part in extended activities. Outcomes include:

- Teachers realised that life skills can be developed whilst children are engaged in a project of interest
- Teachers learnt that process was more important than achieving an end product

- Pupils developed skills and confidence in sharing ideas with their peers and working together

## Englefield Green Infant School and Nursery

### How can we use music to build strong relationships with all our families?

Following research into the take up of after school activities, this enquiry focussed on improving communication and out of school involvement with EAL families. Working with the ACM Gospel Choir and their choir leader Mark De-Lisser, they used singing, composing and choreography to inspire children, staff and parents to sing together. World music links from families involved in the project provided inspiration for the practitioner and participant. The project ended with a large concert with over 500 people attending. Additionally there was a CPD session for staff to develop confidence in singing. Outcomes include:

- ACM students now run a school and community choir in the school
- Teachers are using music in other areas of curriculum
- Previously un-engaged parents are now actively supporting the school

Englefield Green Infant School and Nursery



Holly Lodge Primary School

## Holly Lodge Primary School

### How can we encourage our school community to express their emotions? Does an expression of emotions build confident learners?

This enquiry project looked at ways to enable children to better understand and deal with their emotions through using drama to explore strategies for 'safe' self expression. Drama practitioner, Lizzie Monaghan ran a series of workshops that highlighted how the body, the face, movement, voice and the art of making can help unravel the language of feelings. They involved children, staff and parents in reviewing the outcomes of the project which include:

- Children reported on the 'fun, freedom, opportunity to be creative and never feeling silly'
- The increase in motivation amongst participants has meant that teachers have been asked to give time to 'performance' every day
- Parents have given incredibly positive feedback, supporting the confidence building it has given

## Hythe Primary School

**What can the outdoor environment offer to challenge our more able pupils in maths?**

This school wanted to raise the profile of maths through a creative approach to capture the imagination of a group of gifted and talented pupils at the school. The pupils worked with circus artist Graham Shackell to look at the maths involved in circus arts from the revs per minute of a diabolo to the trajectory of juggling balls and the velocity of pedalos. The pupils then took their new found skills and transferred them to other subjects across the curriculum to inspire their peers. The project culminated in an assembly which was lead entirely by the pupils. Outcomes include:

- Pupils learnt to calculate mathematical problems including velocity, acceleration, timing, speed and RPM whilst also learning circus skills
- A DVD was created which staff continue to use as a learning resource



Hythe Primary School



- The pupils worked in small cross-year groups thereby improving communication skills and improving peer to peer relationships

## Marden Lodge Primary School

**How can we maximise the school grounds and local environment to support and extend children's learning and to inspire and motivate them to become life-long learners?**

Inspiring children was a key element to this enquiry. The school wanted to encourage the children to view their school grounds as a new source and space for learning thereby inspiring them to use their imaginations and their creative thinking skills. Visual artist Lulu Allison worked with staff and pupils on a variety of projects including a camp/outdoor classroom and a painted tipi. Lulu developed a 'dressing up box for the outside', inspiring children and teachers to be playful and imaginative in their use of the outdoor space. Outcomes include:

- Teachers learnt new approaches to creating large scale cross-year group projects and new creative techniques to use again in and outside the classroom
- Children demonstrated greater excitement, enthusiasm, confidence and willingness to collaborate with each other
- The school has developed a creative template for outside learning and a toolkit for staff which can be built upon and developed year on year

## **Meath Green Junior School**

### **How can science be made more participative/innovative in order to excite learning?**

This project involved two Year 6 classes developing investigative skills in science. Using the topic of World War II, they explored all sorts of science connected with the war: radar, sonar, bombs, camouflage. The school worked with science writer and presenter, Richard Robinson. He brought a love of science and skills as a drama practitioner and magician to captivate the children's imaginations and enliven their science learning. In partnership with the class teachers they worked to find ways to combine the development of practical science skills with theoretical learning. Outcomes include:

- Plans for a more innovative and engaging science curriculum, which maximises the use of the school grounds, locality and community
- Children learnt to 'make mistakes' and to take risks
- The profile of science has been raised in the school

## **Merstham Primary School**

### **How can we increase the children's enjoyment of learning and open up new aspects of creative awareness through imaginative and sustained learning outside the classroom?**

Working with drama practitioner Joel Scott and visual artist Becci Kenning this project explored stories, echoes and ghosts from the history of the school, its grounds and the surrounding village. The theme and narrative of the project was developed by the children using drama, poems and music as well as model making, costume design and set building. A night time promenade performance was held in November to share their work with parents. Outcomes include:

- Children will have new art and drama skills to take on to secondary school
- Withdrawn students have become noticeably more participative in group activities
- Staff are more confident in creating bigger and more imaginative displays and are more aware of how creative they are as a team

## **Ottershaw C of E Infant & Junior Schools**

### **How can engaging outdoor activities promote the raising of standards in science?**

Visual artist Lisa Meaney worked with a target group of the school's gifted and talented children (across both key stages) to design an outdoor classroom/ learning environment. They designed a mobile science investigation unit called Gallileo. The children involved acted as researchers, developing their own questions and learning investigative skills so that they could 'unpack the science process'. They presented their ideas to the school along the way so ensuring a whole school awareness of this exciting project. Outcomes include:

- The school now has a unique science resource/equipment to be used across the school
- The project culminated in a whole school assembly pupil-led presentation, also attended by parents
- The pupils involved formed strong relationships which cross-year groups and key stages; their confidence and collaborative skills were seen to increase significantly in the process of the project

## St Anne's Catholic Primary School

**How can we provide exciting and stimulating opportunities for boys in Reception that will help develop their creative literacy skills and allow them to become confident, eager and imaginative writers?**

This school was looking for ways to inspire their pupils to become creative writers and decided to work with performance poet Paul Lyalls. Paul worked with Year 6 and Reception children and also provided additional 'booster' sessions for a small group of boys who had been identified as having particular difficulties with literacy. The project culminated in an extremely well attended poetry and cakes event! Paul performed alongside pupils and led a workshop in which parents and pupils wrote together. A book of the pupils' poems was produced, 'Partners in Words', with work by Year 6 pupils and group poems written by the Reception classes. Outcomes include:

- The 'booster' sessions had a very positive impact on the boys' engagement with the project and the quality of the writing they produced
- The cross-year group element provided opportunities for informal mentoring
- Pupils are now writing at home, with Year 6 keeping journals and communicating online

## St Martin's Church of England Primary School

**How can we inspire and motivate confident, willing and effective writers?**

Literacy had been identified as a key focus for this enquiry and directly links to the current school development plan. The school worked with songwriter Matt Sage who immediately fostered 'a wonder for words' amongst the pupils. Pupils found the song writing and singing process very inspiring. They worked collaboratively developing



St Martin's Church of England Primary School

ideas, sharing them, and choosing the best to develop as songs. Outcomes include:

- Staff were impressed at the spirit of cooperation and collaboration as pupils listened to each other and worked as teams to develop their songs
- Pupils who were usually quiet became more vocal and happy to offer ideas in group settings
- Teachers noted a better appreciation and use of adjectives and a wider and more adventurous vocabulary

## St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

**How can we inspire mathematical curiosity through creativity?**

This enquiry aimed to develop creativity in maths through cookery. This was driven by a school objective to raise standards in numeracy through a more creative and challenging curriculum. Food education consultant, Shirlee Posner worked with all classes and a working party of staff from across the school. Each class worked on a different recipe and looked at wider issues around healthy schools and healthy eating. Outcomes include:



St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

- A website is being developed to share their 'irresistible curriculum'
- The project helped pupils with maths learning - applying percentages, fractions, measuring, estimating
- The school are planning to launch a recipe book in the near future to include maths guidance for parents and encourage maths learning through cookery

## Sythwood Primary School

### How can we enable children to speak about their feelings through creativity?

This school identified that for some children successful participation in the curriculum is impeded by emotional and developmental barriers, often manifesting in poor behaviour and disengagement. They worked with visual artist Becci Kenning to explore ways in which visual language can help children express themselves. They used colour to open up discussion about feelings, developing a mood board in the class to encourage children to express their feelings each day. They also worked with shadow puppets to develop narratives and story. Outcomes include:

- Children, many who have English as a second language, were encouraged to communicate more openly about their feelings and emotions
- Staff learnt new ways of communicating with their pupils through the use of puppetry and storytelling
- Staff noted that most children were more able to share their emotions as individuals rather than as a whole peer group and were less likely to just agree with the thoughts of the rest of the class



Sythwood Primary School

## Woodlea Primary School

### How can we inspire children's creativity using the outdoor environment as a stimulus?

The school wanted to encourage creativity through visual and expressive arts, encouraging children to develop reflective skills and a sense of responsibility towards the environment. They picked a group of children from across all year groups in the school. Working with visual artist Jo Maund, the group chose to focus on scale and look at how large scale objects impact on the environment. As part of the project they visited the Anish Kapoor exhibition at the Royal Academy which was a real highlight for all involved. Outcomes include:

- For this targeted group of students there was a significant impact on their confidence, engagement with learning and their positive contribution in school
- Teachers are now encouraged to use galleries as an educational resource when planning the curriculum
- Teachers are developing a new toolkit of creative activities for the children

## Secondary Schools

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### St Paul's Catholic College

#### How can developing the use of music/creative arts practice in maths, inspire confidence and achievement among Year 8 mathematicians?

The school was keen to expand on creative approaches in more challenging curriculum areas. Musician Mike Fry worked across music and maths departments to inspire composition and performance. The combining of the two subject areas was challenging, with students and staff alike struggling to genuinely maintain complex maths content. However there were significant impacts in terms of developing

creative learning and building confidence in students and teachers. Outcomes include:

- Music activities generated significant excitement and engagement in maths classes
- The project has prompted senior staff to question timetable structure for younger years in the school
- Students were encouraged to see links between subjects and how this can complement learning across subject areas

### Thomas Knyvett College

#### How can telling our story contribute to our school and community cohesion?

The school has been through a number of name changes and the project provided an opportunity to focus on identity. Working with storyteller David Avery, a group of Year 7s who had not previously worked together became a self-organised unit to develop a performance to tell the story of the school. Pupils and teachers used dialogue, writing, storytelling, music, art, poetry and performance to explore the deeper history of the school culminating in a final performance. Outcomes include:

- The teacher reported that through the project the Year 7 group had become the most cohesive and well bonded group in the school
- Pupils were able to articulate their own identity as learners within the wider identity of the school
- The final performance was attended by many parents who wouldn't normally come to events at the school

## Special Schools

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### Pond Meadow School

**Can the engagement of pupils, staff, parents and local community become more innovative and fulfilling by learning from and with people who live and work creatively?**

This enquiry aimed to empower subject leaders to be creative when designing the curriculum. Pupils at Pond Meadow have complex and profound learning difficulties, autism or acute medical conditions. The school recognised that in order for all pupils to access the opportunities both the school and wider community provide, they needed to become more innovative in its thinking. A group of 14-19 year old pupils worked with dance practitioner Natasha Mansfield-Osbourne on non-verbal communication. Through the project they have established links with Woking Dance Festival and the Woking muslim community. Outcomes include:

- Students learnt to use visual rather than verbal instructions
- The use of music and reliance on very few verbal commands helped to create a group dynamic and an opportunity for peace and relaxation

Pond Meadow School



- There were three key areas of staff development – in using non-verbal communication in class, enabling student decision making, and in setting loose targets

### Wishmore Cross School

**What impact can drama and theatre skills have on the development of self-worth and identity of young people with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD)?**

This enquiry looked at ways to adopt a creative approach to self esteem through rap writing, performing and beat boxing with creative practitioner, Ollie Finn. Ollie worked with a group of Year 9 boys with learning and behavioural difficulties on the theme of heroes. They worked in groups and individually, using the theme to explore a range of issues that were pertinent to the group. The project culminated in an assembly performance at school attended by parents and the whole school community of staff and students. A DVD was produced with a compilation of all their work. Outcomes include:

- The work was recognised as having a hugely positive impact on student engagement and behaviour and desire to succeed in school
- The creative practitioner, new to working in an EBD school, learnt new skills and has now been employed by the school on a regular basis
- The press coverage raised the profile of the school in the local community

## Reflecting on the programme

**Teachers and practitioners gathered together to review the programme. Here are some of their thoughts.**

### Supporting change

Most enquiry projects supported broader movements for change. Although individual projects might have included a year group or a class, use of assemblies, staff observations, staff meetings and dedicated CPD sessions enabled more staff to benefit from the project.

### Teaching and learning

Teachers were challenged to be more creative in their short term planning and to take on more open ended outcomes. They needed to be champions for this way of working as some colleagues could be quite risk averse in the current climate. For some, the work impacted on the 'hidden curriculum' – in the significant impact

the projects had on social and emotional development. Often children that struggled normally in school would respond well to a more creative approach.

### Partnership working

Many referred to the benefits of creative practitioners working with teachers and teaching assistants to model creative approaches to teaching and learning. The opportunity to embrace new teaching approaches was clearly energising for all involved. There were many examples where teachers took on and delivered tasks as well as the creative practitioners.

### A creative practitioner in school

The list of benefits of working with a creative practitioner was long! At its most basic, they were a fresh face in school, a 'real person' who brought a 'wow' factor. They brought new skills and ideas, an injection of new energy, giving teachers and pupils the confidence to try new things. They were able to draw out developments in unexpected



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ways. Practitioners were good role models for pupils and additionally they brought a range of contacts and opportunities to the school.

### **Reflection and enquiry**

Teachers talked about the power of new language such as ‘discovery’ and ‘enquiry’. They remarked on the value of approaching their enquiry question as a community – involving staff, children and often parents. Teachers talked about ‘silly signs’; the observations they made, often the basis of knowing their class over a period of time. Many reflected on the importance of building in enough time for review through the life of the project and as part of the creative process. Schools had used a whole variety of tools including creative journals, walls/ displays, podcasts and the web.

### **Practitioner learning**

For some, there were tangible benefits such as resources or written programmes of work to take away. Others reported on improved

facilitation skills. They talked about their role in creating an environment for creative learning; one in which all contributions are valued and children are never underestimated. Finally they stressed the need for creative practitioners to maintain their own identity and creativity throughout the process.

### **Legacy**

The question of legacy is one that runs through the life of an enquiry project. The opportunity to review the project with senior management is essential in order to determine next steps. Where support was lacking, it was difficult to see a future for the work. However for most, it was a matter of seeing new opportunities for creative teaching across the curriculum and building on the new confidence in collaborating with colleagues. The skills left with teachers and pupils were considerable. Many schools were more inclined to work with practitioners again, and several practitioners are already discussing new opportunities in these Surrey schools.

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