

Cultural Leadership in Education



Accounts of Practice 2018-19



Introduction

Welcome to the third collection of accounts of practice, written by participants in the Cultural Leadership in Education (CLE) Programme 2018-19. This collection was distributed at Newcastle University on 20 June 2019 as part of a celebration event. Contact details for organisations are provided at the back of the collection.

“The Cultural Leadership programme is designed to inspire school teachers and leaders in the North East to approach curriculum and leadership development differently and more creatively with the ultimate aim to make a difference for our children and young people in the North East. This year’s accounts of practice demonstrate the various authors’ commitment to the development of the Arts, culture and school leadership within their own school settings and beyond. I am impressed by their commitment to their own professional learning and their leadership that led to these extremely diverse, creative and transferable projects, which have also influenced, involved and motivated pupils, staff and the authors’ wider school communities.”

René Koglbauer

Newcastle University North Leadership Centre

“The Cultural Leaders in Education Programme helps leaders to become transformational in their actions by empowering them through creative thinking, capacity building and solution-focused models. The accounts of practice in this booklet reflect deeply felt passion and commitment to developing the arts and culture for their intrinsic worth. I hope fellow teachers will find it motivating to read about what can be achieved. It was a privilege to work with teachers whose achievements surpassed even their own high expectations.”

Claire King

Programme Facilitator

The Cultural Leadership in Education programme is empowering leaders to think differently about curriculum development, about how to inspire colleagues and build partnerships. It is increasingly important that every child and young person has the opportunity to experience arts and culture and schools have a key role in making sure that happens. The accounts of practice demonstrate a range of approaches and highlight the creativity of teachers to innovate, embed and share good practice.

Jeanne Hale

Consultant - Culture Bridge North East

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The Work of Culture Bridge North East



Culture Bridge North East's vision is that everyone growing up in our region should have a childhood rich with arts and culture

We believe that arts and cultural education is not only the spark that creates the artists, performers, makers and curators of the future, but that it is essential for children's quality of life. Taking part in excellent cultural education enables children to make meaning, discover connections with others, find and develop their unique talents, and build the confidence, resilience and transferable skills that set them up for life. Culture Bridge North East collaborates with organisations across the North East and beyond to champion culture and the arts as vital parts of childhood.

We offer a wide range of high quality CPD events, programmes and conferences as well as leading on Arts Award and Artsmark programmes across the region on behalf of Arts Council England.



Arts Award supports children and young people to develop as artists and arts leaders. It deepens engagement with arts and culture, develops both creative and leadership skills, and importantly, the Arts Award leads to a national qualification. Through the five different levels of Arts Award, children and young people aged up to 25 can explore any art form. The award builds confidence, helps young people engage and enjoy cultural activities and prepares them for further education and employment.



Artsmark, the award for schools, has been designed by schools for schools. Artsmark protects and supports arts in education settings, helping to unlock the potential of children and young people, to develop character, talent, and increase knowledge and understanding. 24% of all schools in the North East are now Artsmark Schools.

Cultural Leadership in Education Programme

The course has been developed in partnership with Culture Bridge North East and Newcastle University North Leadership Centre, with the aim of building a group of cultural leaders in schools to lead cultural learning experiences.

Participants are helped to understand their role as curriculum leaders and gain access to opportunities for cultural and creative learning within their own schools and across a network of local schools. They become advocates for arts and culture and are able to assess and articulate the impact on children and young people as well as being thoroughly informed about cultural organisations.

Since 2016 60 teachers have completed the course and feedback has been very positive:

“Longer term, the CLE course has given me the courage to go to my SLT's and champion an Arts Policy within school, not just in support of Artsmark (which we continue to hold at Gold level) but also ensuring all students in all areas have access to forms of Arts/ Cultural engagement with all subject areas to develop broader and more sustainable skill set.” CLE Graduate



Launching in autumn 2019, Creative Classroom is an online CPD and events programme especially for classroom teachers.

The programme will infuse culture and creativity into the curriculum, supporting teachers through the sharing of CPD resources and good practice.

The key elements of the programme are:

- Online virtual CPD resource
- Termly network meetings
- Regional CPD events
- Curriculum development support

Arts Council England funds 10 Bridges across England, all of which are tasked with the strategic development of arts and cultural education by, with and for children and young people. Culture Bridge North East is managed by Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums and based at the Discovery Museum in Newcastle.

Our contact details can be found on the last page of this booklet.

Pride not prejudice: raising the profile of LGBT+ people through collaborative art

Rosie Bush, Duchess' Community High School

The Duchess's Community High School has a huge geographical catchment across Northumberland, central to which is the town of Alnwick. There, in 2018, the first ever 'Northumberland Pride' was held near the school site, and despite its newness the event was embraced. In the weeks and months following, many conversations took place between students and staff about the event and what it stood for, "a celebration of LGBT+ life in Northumberland".



As a large secondary school, DCHS has a fair number of students who identify as LGBT+ . However, as the school only recently expanded to include year 7 and 8, the existing dialogue needed to be tailored to include younger students in an accessible way.

Development

Following the success of Pride, where sixth-formers marched through town carrying a banner designed by KS3 students, a call was put out for anyone interested in joining an LGBT+ committee. Twenty students attended the first meeting, where we worked to establish a common goal.







My colleague Bex Makkamure and I started with the desire to improve student wellbeing and encourage an attitudinal shift, raising the profile of LGBT+ people in the school community.

The students had similar ideas about how they wanted LGBT+ people to be represented. We asked the group to go away and consider how they could best express this on a whole-school level.

At the next meeting the students agreed on a collaborative piece of art that would involve all members of the student body, be visually beautiful and meaningful. This was a big ask!

With guidance from older students, and the frequent reminder that "we have almost no budget", the students eventually decided on:



-  Public locations around the school – 3 large glass windows with high thoroughfare
-  Use of liquid chalk markers – enabling pupils from all year groups to add to the artwork without needing any artistic skill
-  Sentence starters, not specific to LGBT+ but on the theme of pride, "I feel pride when..." or "I feel pride for..."
-  All pupils would be invited to take part with no pressure to do so
-  The installation would coincide with 'wear a rainbow' day in school (Tuesday 21st May)
-  Local press would be invited to photograph the artworks

At the time of going to print the artworks are about a week away from completion – everything is ready to go, we are just waiting for our school ‘rainbow day’.



Impact

As the installations have not yet been completed it is impossible to measure the whole-school impact. However, some benefits are already apparent.

At the first meeting students completed a questionnaire on how they felt LGBT+ people were perceived and treated in the school community. Responses suggested that, while some people were ‘out and proud’, the vast majority felt isolated. 60% of students noted that it was ‘embarrassing’ to talk about sexuality and gender and that LGBT+ matters were often a source of mockery in school. Furthermore, although meetings were always positive, some students were reluctant to share their involvement outside of the group. By the time that the art project was calendared, many were

proudly declaring their knowledge of the plans during tutor time, some standing up to explain to their classes what the installation would involve.

A second questionnaire will be distributed to the committee after the project, but we already perceive attitudinal shifts. Posters advertising Northumberland Pride, ‘Wear a Rainbow Day’ and the ‘Rainbow Windows’ are a familiar, colourful sight around school.

Recommendations

It was important that the project was student-led. Although we had a common goal, students devised the method of promoting LGBT+ life through art. We collaborated with Northumberland Pride and invited their Chair in to talk to students during one of our meetings. This has created links which we can build on in future years.

Similarly, the very small monetary cost for relatively large visibility has ensured that senior leaders and teaching staff are not averse to being involved again in the future. For us the next step is to embed student-led planning and collaborative artwork into the curriculum.

Challenges

Logistically the project has been surprisingly manageable. The limited budget of around £50 (taken from the Citizenship fund) helped students to generate a manageable project rather than to limit imagination. We were forced to use existing canvasses (the windows) and tools that could be enjoyed by non-artists (the chalk pens). Initial limitations were embraced by our creative youngsters.

Reflections

We followed the reverse Guskey model during the planning stage and will evaluate accordingly. The questionnaires either side of the project will enable quantitative comparison.

In addition, the artworks themselves will provide written feedback from each year group and could shape future projects within and outside of the realm of LGBT+. Verbal comments from students during the creation of the rainbow windows will be noted by sixth-form helpers. I hope to be able to share photos of the finished artworks when we meet on 20th June.

Exploring culture through arts and heritage

Georgina Dismore, Esh C of E Primary School

Teaching of the Arts is fundamental at Esh C of E Primary School and we are committed to providing our children with a range of art experiences. We are currently working towards the Artsmark award. As part of this process, we are working to raise the profile of arts and culture by developing more clubs, trips and events throughout the school year, providing extra-curricular opportunities for children and families. Discussions with pupils about arts and culture alongside the cultural provision audit filled out by staff also highlighted aims for the project.

Project aims

- Encourage whole school participation in a range of Arts
- To provide children with opportunities to explore cultural identity through local history, traditions and arts activities.
- To develop relationships with local artists and cultural organisations.

Development

Our school has an annual 'Creative Week', where children and their families participate in a range of arts activities around a theme. Following 'Day A' this felt like the perfect launch pad to achieving our aims and encouraging our children to reflect on the ideas of community and cultural identity.

During a meeting with a governor who works at Beamish Museum, we discussed ways we would be able to use the museum as a cultural partner. Together we came up with a focus for Creative week based on cultural heritage and the local tradition of banners, getting the children involved in creating a new banner for the school. We would launch the week with a whole school trip to Beamish where they would support us in teaching the children about banner parades and what banners represent.

This early win motivated discussions with other members of staff, coming up with ideas for further activities and trips. Our music teacher agreed to lead workshops with a focus on local traditional songs. A teaching assistant also contacted our previous deputy head, who offered to lead Maypole dancing workshops. Our kitchen staff also agreed to lead baking/ cooking workshops for each class.

I also approached Ushaw College, asking what cultural heritage workshops they could provide. They offered a variety of activities for KS2 children including traditional games, Latin and making a medal. Unfortunately, they initially didn't have activities for KS1/EYFS but were very keen to collaborate on creating activities. Following a tour and a meeting with the Education and Learning Officer we were able to differentiate activities so that every child could benefit from this partnership.

Once most events were finalised, a timetable for each class was created and given to class teachers.

Class 4 Creative Week Timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
9:30-10:30	Beamish Trip	Art council competition	Ushaw College Trip	Maypole	
10:45 - 11:45					
1:00-2:00		Banner design	Banner making workshop	Traditional cooking	Banner parade/showcase of work
2:00 - 3:00		Folk songs			

Off-site school trips, In class activities, Workshops, Celebration of achievements

A similar timetable and letter was sent to parents, enabling them to see when the workshops were with enough time to plan any involvement they would like to have. During an Arts council meeting, the children decided they would like to run an art competition based on the theme of local environment. They were also tasked with the jobs of creating posters to advertise the week and thinking of ways to fundraise.

Challenges and Recommendations

Finding funding was the biggest challenge faced during this project. As the costs of artists, trips and transport can be expensive and quickly add up; in previous years we have had to reduce the amount offered and choose more affordable options. I had to balance keeping costs affordable for school without compromising on the quality and experiences provided.

In a meeting with the Head-Teacher we discussed a range of options including: applying for grants, in-school fundraising and looking at the skills of staff/ volunteers already involved with the school. Further fundraising ideas came from our Arts council. They suggested bake sales, sponsored activities and events, film clubs and competitions and were very eager to get involved raising money.

Our biggest funding support came from applying for the Culture Bridge Fund. This took longer than expected due to waiting for quotes from companies to come through as we needed the documentation for what we wished to claim for. I would recommend getting quotes for any high cost aspects of an event like this as early into the organising stage as possible. I was unable to achieve this for what would have been our biggest cost, however did secure funding for entry to Beamish, transport and arts materials for the week.

As mentioned before, we were aiming to have a banner artist to work with children to create a new school banner. Unfortunately, due to our event being close to the miner's gala, it proved difficult to secure an artist in time to get the funding we would need. This led to a discussion with staff where we looked at alternative options. We considered classes or individual children each making a banner to display in school and having a whole school banner parade to display them at the end. This would give every child something to create which could symbolise their reflections on the week.

Impact

As Creative Week takes place in June, the final impact cannot yet be measured. However, there have already been some evident benefits to school. The main benefit so far has been the partnerships created with cultural organisations. We are currently involved in a STEM project with Beamish and one class is getting support with a local history topic. Ushaw College have remained in regular contact and we are currently organising school's involvement in future community projects there. I aim to now extend these contacts throughout school, keeping these relationships sustainable and accessible by all.

On reflection, it was fantastic to see just how many people were willing to get involved in planning and organising this project. It highlighted to me how supportive the team I work with are, and strengthened relationships with governors and members of staff whose creativity and motivation proved fundamental throughout the development process. I aim to continue working with this team to collaborate on planning and developing further arts and cultural opportunities throughout the school year.

Raising the profile of music within school, making the unmusical, musical

Adam Featherstone, Priory Woods School & Arts College

I teach music at Priory Woods, a Middlesbrough based School and Arts College for SEND pupils aged 4-19. We are an Artsmark platinum school and run many arts accreditations such as BATD dance and Arts Award, we also work with many external practitioners from dancers to musicians. Each learner gets 1 creative day in which to do Art, Drama, Dance and Music (alongside other creative options such as Textiles and Shakespeare Drama).

Our students are amazing, enthusiastic and are ready for anything, however many of them do not or have not played a music instrument in the same way a Neuro-typical student might, unfortunately they do not always have the same opportunities. This is due to a number of factors most notably a lack of experience or a believed inaccessibility. The nature of their learning means that they take a lot longer to process information and typically work at a level lower than their mainstream counterparts. Uptake for instrumental music making outside of school is non-existent. Everyone should have the option to be able to play a musical instrument. I am hopeful we might inspire but also celebrate. To do this I have 3 main ideas, these will hopefully intertwine increasingly as the year goes on.

1. Organisational change- this will include staff CPD, curriculum change, classroom reorganisation and a music instrument loan library.
2. 1:1 music lessons built out of external volunteers and pupil premium finances.
3. A new ensemble, an "Open Orchestra" to promote music making and performance within and outside school.

1. Organisational change/staff CPD

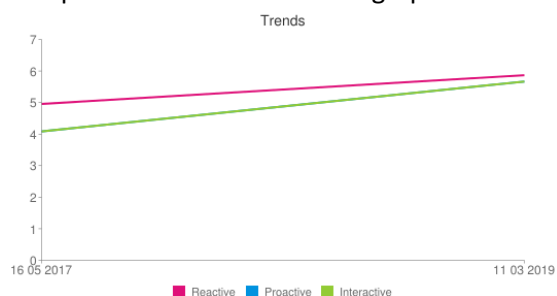
As students only have 1 hour of music a week, in the spring term I redeveloped my classroom to make it more accessible to students both inside and outside of their curriculum time. Music notation was made accessible through new musical pieces transcribed around an increasing level of difficulty, as the display goes higher the pieces get harder. Wall displays and classroom layout was made more accessible, with instruments already set up with equipment and guitars mounted in a corner. Staff have also had Twilight CPD training in Ukulele and music technology and more is planned. One other positive from this is that it identified musical staff who have been timetabled to support the department. *"That training (ukulele) has made me more confident to use music within the classroom"*. T.A- Nov 18.



1:1 lessons

Back in 2016/17 the seed was planted to get financial support from Pupil Premium students to provide them with musical keyboards. A lot of students had shown an interest in music but lacked the necessary equipment to play music at home. This initially proved semi successful. A musical instrument library is being set up to allow pupils the chance to take home an instrument. In the short term instruments have been hired from our local music service. This helped identify pupils who have both the ability and enthusiasm to play a more expensive or complicated instrument such as a saxophone or cello. Below is a graph taken from the sounds of intent framework that shows musical progress for one student with previous behavioural issues.

<http://www.soundsofintent.org/>



“(Student) loves the keyboard, got a little band going now with his guitar and drums. 😊”

14th January message in diary

November-March 2018

Students are now enrolled in small group lessons, these groupings were taken from the initial interest in taking music keyboards home with musical notation. Students are being supported, either by sending additional music home or by regular contact with parents. However it was discovered that some students wanted to make music but did not like the keyboard. Vocals, saxophone, cello and ukulele 2:1/small group lessons were offered after an initial loan of several classical instruments from our local music service TVMS. This identified pupil potential and interest without a large financial cost. This was also made possible by the time given by kind freelance musicians, some of who are now employed by via pupil premium and hopefully in the future by various grants. A music sound beam was loaned to provide an instrument for our students with complex needs. <https://www.soundbeam.co.uk/>

Open Orchestra

At the start of the academic year an Open Orchestra was set up to form an inclusive musical ensemble that the school could develop in partnership with others, a joint project with Beverley School. This has been possible with the support from our local town hall and MUSINC, with the aim of creating a classical music ensemble. The first term was spent teaching students to listen and to work as a group. The second was spent with a pupil/staff identified instrument and the third term was working in an ensemble with Beverley School students. We have received fantastic feedback from each performance, both in school to venues such as Middlesbrough Town Hall and the Emirates Cricket ground. As well as being fantastic opportunities for our students, we have shown to each audience that music can be made by anyone with a desire to be creative. Our material has ranged from original compositions to modern versions of Classical pieces such as Jupiter by Holst.

December feedback from parent via email:

“Just wanted to say thanks to the teachers and Adam (music teacher) for inviting us today was so lovely were so proud of A (Pupil A) he’s amazing!”

March 2019 Quote from B.B Voice of the Child Children’s services conference organiser:

“The young people were amazing! I have heard nothing but praise for their outstanding performance. Thank you for all of the hard work that has gone into preparing for the performance and thank you for agreeing to be a part of the day!”

Outcomes

There has been a huge uptake in pupil music making both inside and outside of school, behaviour has improved, social skills have improved, staff enthusiasm about music has risen and more staff feel comfortable to teach and use music in sessions.

Evidence of the benefits of music making have come from target wheel pupil evaluations, parental comments, verbal feedback, interviews, keyboard feedback from home use, Sounds of Intent assessment data, Open Orchestra data and audience feedback amongst other forms. These can be shared on request.



Promoting children's love of singing

Lisa Hall, Cragside Primary School

Statement focus

As designated Arts and Culture Ambassador and music coordinator, I was keen to further promote children's love of singing throughout the school. The value of singing is well-documented and it goes without saying that taking part in such activities dramatically improves self-esteem, helps children to be calmer and more focused and increases enjoyment and engagement in class. Whilst singing was regularly taking place in classes throughout school and in assemblies, sadly our playground was devoid of such activity. My plan from the outset was to slowly but surely instigate change in our children's playtime activities and encourage collaborative play through playground action songs. As we are all aware, playtimes are a vital part of the school day; however, there are some for whom playtime can be the most challenging time in the day - a time when they may be left out of games or have no one to play with. Could being involved in playground singing be used as an instrument of change for such children? This was a question that I was also keen to explore.

Development process

My first task was to develop a repertoire of playground songs: a bank of songs that were simple to learn yet engaging and fun to sing. After reading widely about the benefits of playground singing, 'Sing Up' came up with the goods! Not only did this wonderful website provide me with range of fun and engaging action songs but it also furnished me with detailed teaching notes too. My next step was to spread the word about playground singing and try out a few songs with the whole school to gauge levels of engagement and enthusiasm amongst the children. Weekly singing practise with the whole school was the ideal vehicle for this; each song was extremely well-received, particularly amongst the younger children within school. It was clear to see after only a few sessions that Year 3 would be my focus group. When singing, the joy on their faces was infectious and their eagerness to take part was palpable: I had found my playground singing ambassadors.

During my initial meeting with the Year 3 class teachers, I asked them to highlight any children whom they felt struggle with unstructured time and the social challenges of playtimes. I explained that one of the aims of my project was to assess if playground singing games impacted positively upon the way in which these children experience playtimes.



I undertook informal playground observations of the target children and it was evident that for the most part these children were on the periphery of group-based play and often chose to take part in solitary play. After speaking to them about how playtimes made them feel, I was given the following responses:

"Playtimes can be scary. Everyone is running in different directions and shouting at the top of their voices."

"I never know what to do. Everyone seems to be playing a game I don't know how to play."

Weekly singing sessions with each class were then timetabled and I began to teach the children the repertoire of songs I had chosen. After each session, both class teachers were given teaching notes to accompany the songs to enable them to practise the melody, lyrics and actions in class prior to the next session. Despite the increasing pressures placed on the creative curriculum by core subjects, both teachers were able to find pockets of time in which to reinforce the learning taking place during our timetabled sessions. In fact, they reported that the children's faces visibly lifted when told that they could have some playground singing time.

Account of the benefits and evidence of impact

Thus far, I have worked with Year 3 for a full half term and already they have mastered five playground action songs. I plan to continue the project until the end of the summer term at which point I will measure the impact playground singing has had on playtimes in general and on the target children through further playground observations and pupil interviews. Already, staff on playground duty have reported that there is an increased number of children self-initiating and taking part in playground singing without adult intervention. Interim interviews with target children are also positive. One child reported;

“I’ve enjoyed learning the songs. My favourite is ‘Bungalow’. Me and my friends can make our own funny actions.” Another told me, “I like the silly words to some of the songs. They’re easy to remember and everyone in my class knows them so we can all join in.”

Recommendations and proposals for practice

Looking forward, in the autumn term I intend to periodically introduce additional playground songs to the whole school during weekly singing sessions which I lead. During my release time, I intend to continue to work with a core group of children from the current Year 3 classes and develop their role as ‘singing leaders’ which will involve the children themselves teaching playground songs to their peers across key stages. Furthermore, with the support of the head teacher, who is keen to develop staff confidence in the teaching of music across the school, I would like to deliver regular staff training to equip teachers, support staff and lunchtime supervisors with the requisite skills and knowledge so that they can actively encourage and promote playground singing games. This would involve setting aside dedicated staff meeting time, once each half term, as well as additional training sessions for lunchtime supervisors.



Discussion of challenges, barriers and issues

In addition to choosing Year 3 as my focus year group, I introduced the repertoire to my Year 6 class. The response to this was somewhat muted and at first many of the children, particularly the boys, were self-conscious and felt the songs to be ‘silly’ or ‘babyish’. As a result, I began to wonder whether playground singing was an activity that only younger children might enjoy. However, as the sessions progressed, the embarrassment subsided and overall enthusiasm markedly improved. We currently sing playground songs during ‘rest breaks’ to aid concentration and improve focus throughout afternoon teaching sessions. Interestingly, the older Year 6 children have even started to customise the songs and make them their own by changing the lyrics. Whilst enthusiasm within Year 3 was not a challenge, I had underestimated how difficult some children would find combining singing and movement. To rectify this, at the beginning of every session I planned-in a range of body percussion activities to help develop the children’s sense of pulse and steady beat.

Reflections on what has been learnt and achieved

The journey to put singing back into the heart of our school playground has well and truly begun. After only half a term, singing games have become more prevalent during break times. Staff on playground duty have reported that children have invited them to join their singing games. Moreover, the target children, who can find the unstructured nature of playtimes problematic, are joining in with these games too.

Art and RE: how can we develop a richer Cultural intent at our Church School?

Mo Healy, Dr Thomlinson School

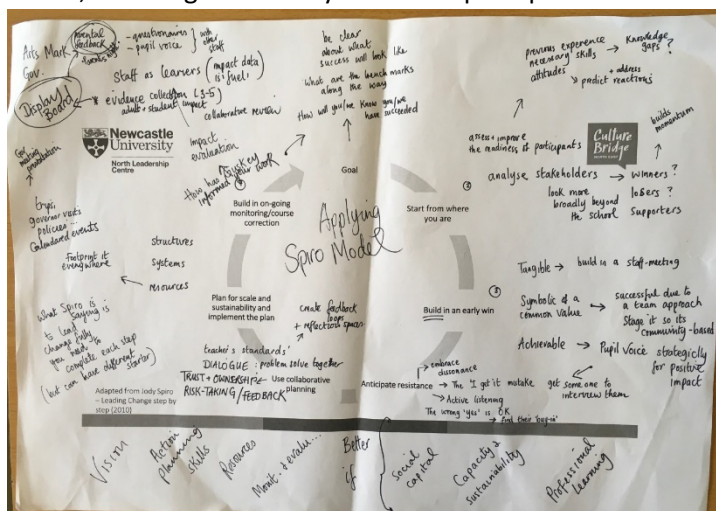
Statement of focus

At Dr Thomlinson's School we champion, develop and invest in cultural experiences that enrich pupils' lives. We support a range of cultural learning across the Arts through our broad and balanced curriculum, extra-curriculum programme and specialist teaching. I was keen to consider the culture of Dr Thomlinson's through our shared values as well as cultural learning within the curriculum through the Arts- resulting in increased cultural capital for our students.

Development Process

Research (Bourdieu 1991) suggests that a positive school ethos; such as in a Church School compensates for any pupils' lack of cultural capital outside school. Day 1 Cultural understanding analysis was relatable to our Church School context - culture as shared values; as artistic activity; as identity/heritage. Our school's core values help us delve deeper into our distinctive character as a Church school by offering pupils/staff essential vocabulary, a set of benchmarks against which we can assess our experience of school life. We enable pupils to live out these core values and I wonder how we might develop more effective ways of exploring our values through Art/RE?

Art is a popular subject, as highlighted in our recent SIP report. I surveyed students, finding they liked the 'degree of independence and freedom they had in Art, even though it was demanding and they have to work hard'. Unpacking students understanding of 'Culture and the Arts' next helped improve literacy by developing oracy and specialist vocabulary. Our School clearly has a significant impact on student's engagement with the Arts- this was critiqued with SLT; resulting in 'an early win'- as it prompted a more accurate, wider and deeper understanding of 'Cultural activities' in our SMSC audit. I was delighted to have positive profile for Art identified and celebrated but it led me to consider how pupils could become further engaged in their learning in the other subject I teach across school- Religious Education. RE Student Voice reviewed learning through a book scrutiny of work completed so far this academic year. We reflected on why their visual art work was more engaging for them, and what it was about these learning tasks that stood out.



I identified a training session organised by Karenza Passmore, director of the Religious Resources Centre at Church House- our key Cultural Partner as a Church School in Newcastle Diocese. Working alongside Karenza we trialled a sequence of activities to create a collaborative 'Hunger-Cloth/Lenten-Veil together; developing and evaluating the learning path for success. I had previous experience that providing arts-based learning activities had a positive impact on pupil's engagement in RE. My plan was to integrate a reflective practice element early in the process, encouraging pupil's collaborative input, widen access to Art as part of whole-school Cultural Education and adopting an evidence-informed approach to teaching and learning as a way of embedding the new RE Framework.

Evidence of impact

Blending Arts Council Quality Principles with Guskey's Evaluation model was useful for evidencing impact. Learning differed from the pattern of previous Art/RE based CPD in that the focus put the relationship

between school and practitioner at the heart of a joint yet wider enquiry-based challenge framework. Pupils had to use skills and techniques to explore enquiry in RE through a visual lens; a different perspective. In feedback, pupils described these as fun, different and engaging approaches to learning, where they could make choices and shape their lessons. In light of The Chadwick Report - Church School of the Future Review (2012), the Christian Core Values for Schools website recommends the use of the Arts as a means of gathering evidence for SIAMS inspections as they are better matched to a range of learning styles. Renewed and strengthening of partnership work between RE/ Arts in a Church School with our Cultural partner organisation in the Diocese was also of considerable benefit to both sides. Karenza's values and motivation aligned really well with ours. This allowed development of powerful lessons and shared resources.

Challenges

I could have differentiated cultural activity by focussing on learners who experience disadvantage - as well as those encountering specific barriers to accessing Art and RE lessons in Year 6/7. Being aware and respectful of SATs interventions, assessment systems, school priorities, communication challenges and the profile of pupils are all essential elements. School has recently taken part in 'Thrive' programme training and I wonder how the impact of Cultural arts activities / core values supports pupil well-being?

Reflections on what has been learnt and achieved

Pupils were as much a part of the embedding process as I was as facilitator; they were keen and proud for their ideas and responses to help re-shape RE lessons.

Systems for monitoring and evaluating

The Cultural Audits, surveys at 3 key points and evaluations helped capture and track attitudes, successes, obstacles and achievement against which progress could be measured.

Teacher agency has developed; I regained confidence in my ability and skills to make decision and to innovate in a different area of the curriculum- showing commitment to improvement of the provision of RE in our school

The School challenge framework approach to enquiry questions as titles had not been so closely integrated with Cultural learning before; the balance of these two aspects was of particular note.

To conclude, keeping focused on teaching and learning is important. My role as a Cultural leader is to offer thoughtful inspiration for change; encouraging colleagues to seek wider CPD, to model an evidence-based approach to planning through Student Voice, to seek deeper subject engagement through an arts approach, to curate the experience of Cultural Arts in RE and our core values so that others can recognise why it is so enriching for pupils. At Dr Thomlinson's we are keen not to lose sight of the outcomes that can be more difficult to capture and measure in RE, such as sense of awe, spiritual capacity, stillness, empathy and creativity, and to continue to work towards a rich cultural intent for all our pupils.



Creative mindfulness in a PRU setting

Gina Nesbitt, The Link School, Sunderland



Who are we and what do we do?

The Link School, Sunderland, provides education and support through alternative provision to ensure that every learner reaches their full potential.

With a strong ethos of partnership working, we provide an exciting and personalised curriculum from Key Stages 2-4 with a strong emphasis on high quality educational experiences.

I work within KS3 as part of a dedicated and hard-working team of professionals. We are all fully committed to providing the best possible educational experience for our learners who for many reasons are not able to attend mainstream schools. As a forward-thinking and reflective team we have sought to design a curriculum around the needs of our learners and ensure that we employ a holistic approach. This has meant that we are able to include, not just the academic elements required of a school curriculum, but also focus on the wider well-being of our learners.

Creative Mindfulness

We are fortunate to have employed a teaching assistant with expertise in a range of well-being techniques including Reiki, Indian head massage and mindfulness. Nicole Hackett, with the full support of the KS3 and leadership teams, has designed a programme of lessons which all of our KS3 learners access at least once per week. These sessions include a starter of mindfulness which takes the form of bubble blowing to control breathing, essential oils and candles to enrich the senses and calming parachute work to promote teamwork. Learners are then encouraged to take time out to discuss thoughts and feelings in a calm and supportive environment before spending time engaging in focused creative work.

We have chosen a local nursery in Sunderland to share our creative work with and have visited with our learners to find out what they need from us and how we can support their work. Bright Stars Nursery in Hendon offer a unique learning experience for children aged from 0-5yrs and is a magical child-centred wonderland! As you can see from the pictures below they have a passion to ignite children's imagination and creativity using nature and all of the play equipment is made from donated, recycled and upcycled materials. This gave us our focus!



Our Creative Focus

Since our initial visit, we have been collecting a vast array of recycled and donated materials and have set about making items for the children at Bright Stars. To date we have made wigwams for their small world area, egg box pirate ships, a large teepee for a reading area and mobiles for the baby room. We will be continuing our building projects throughout the year and plan on making mosaic topped tables, a pallet mud kitchen and various water play toys for the children. Through continued work with Bright Stars other community settings, we hope to raise the self-esteem of our learners through the successful completion of their creative projects.

The Benefits of Creative Mindfulness

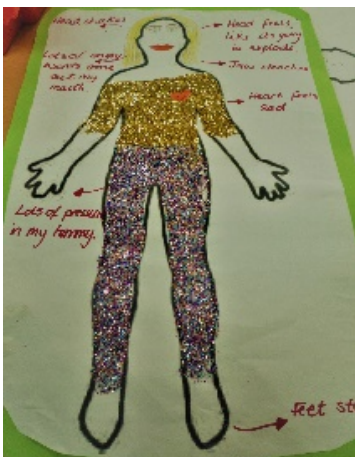
Our learners produce their best when they are calm, relaxed and well supported. We thrive on our relationships with our learners and particularly during our creative mindfulness sessions. We create a calming environment and ensure that all learners feel included, supported and listened to. Our learners initially felt very sceptical that breathing exercises, thoughtful activities and relaxation techniques would work for them but now remind each other of the positive benefits during times of high anxiety or stress. The creative element of each session means that all learners can express themselves without the pressure of producing a 'perfect' piece of artwork. As well as producing items for the nursery, the artwork sessions have focused a range of experiences including what their feelings might look like if we could see them (see the body picture below), how to support their own mental health and the making of sensory items such as mood jars and stress balls.

Head Teacher Donna Walker said the following about the inclusion of Creative Mindfulness into the school curriculum. "The inclusion of Creative Mindfulness into the KS3 curriculum has had a significant impact on the emotional well-being on the school as a whole, this includes both the staff and pupils. Creative mindfulness and how it is delivered in our setting encourages our young people to deal with their thoughts and feelings outside a normal classroom setting – the impacts on both pupil behavior and engagement has been amazing resulting in less crisis incidents within the setting and a more considered approach to dealing with their behavior – staff have felt the benefit too."

Nicole Hackett also added;

"Stop, breathe and create is the focus of all our creative mindfulness classes. Tuning into the present moment helps to keep focus and in turn helps to see the bigger picture. This practice supports behavioural development and helps students self-regulate their emotions, feelings and promotes self-confidence."

Anything is possible with creative mindfulness!



Improving uptake of instrumental lessons amongst the Pupil Premium cohort at Key Stage 3

Thos Oates, Sacred Heart Catholic High School



SACRED HEART

Background

Sacred Heart Catholic High School is a large girls' academy in the west-end of Newcastle Upon Tyne. We have a higher than average proportion of students who are eligible for the Pupil Premium (34.4%). The Music Department plays a large role in the school's cultural life with numerous extra-curricular clubs and ensembles, liturgical music, and instrumental lessons offered. For those who are eligible, the Pupil Premium (PP) covers the costs of instrumental lessons.

Whilst background reading for the Cultural Leadership in Education course I was particularly struck by the data showing the negative impact of deprivation on children's education, and on the ability of cultural activities to help alleviate that impact and improve the life chances of those who engage with the arts. Research shows that participation in arts activities can increase cognitive abilities by 17%, substantially improve the chances of disadvantaged students getting a degree, and help to encourage disengaged students' attendance and enjoyment of school. After analysing the list of KS3 students taking instrumental lessons I realised that uptake amongst the PP cohort (12.9%) was significantly lower than amongst the non-PP cohort (20.7%), even though the Pupil Premium could cover the lessons' cost.

Project Aims

In light of these findings I aimed to:

- improve uptake of instrumental lessons amongst PP students, specifically targeting students who engage meaningfully in KS3 curriculum music lessons;
- particularly encourage lessons on 'minority' instruments (which are in danger of having no players in school).

Project Implementation

I consulted departmental colleagues and peripatetic instrumental teachers to discuss whether a targeted approach would work and to ensure their workload would remain manageable if the project succeeded. I then composed a letter to be sent to eligible students' parents/guardians, explaining that lessons could be paid for by PP funding, outlining the educational benefits of music lessons, and encouraging uptake of 'minority' instruments by (truthfully) listing them as not having waiting lists, whereas other instrumental lessons do. Letters were personalised with parents' and students' names, and hand-signed to show they were a personal invitation rather than a generic mail-out. In all, 136 personalised letters were posted. I also organised an assembly to promote instrumental lessons and arranged for the cello and woodwind teachers to run instrument demonstrations for some classes.

The Project's Impact

In the three months since posting the letters the response has been positive, with 48 of the targeted students signing up for instrumental lessons. Of these, 25 have opted to learn a 'minority' instrument. If these 48 students persevere on their chosen instrument, uptake of instrumental lessons amongst PP students will have more than doubled to 33.6% of the PP cohort. Interestingly, there has also been increased interest in instrumental lessons from non-PP students; some inspired by the assembly and demonstrations, with others inspired by seeing friends recently start lessons.

The long-term impact is harder to gauge, though we can draw some general conclusions. Departmentally, it is very encouraging that so many students are learning an instrument; we will endeavour to maintain this 'buzz' around instrumental tuition for the future. I am delighted to hear neglected, yet wonderful

instruments such as flute, trumpet and viola being again played in school; hopefully these players will continue to improve and encourage others to learn, until they are no longer 'minority' instruments.

At a societal level, it is excellent that the Pupil Premium can make a cultural difference to underprivileged children, especially since the evidence is so strong for the educational and cognitive benefits of learning a musical instrument.

Statistically, measuring any long-term improvements in educational attainment amongst our recent beginners would be a challenging task that would probably take years to show any impact. However, I asked some students who have taken instrumental lessons for a year or more whether they felt their lessons had any effect on other parts of their education. I found many responses humbling, and they reaffirmed my belief in the value of this project:

"Music lessons build my confidence and allow me to acknowledge my own insecurities."

Year 10 PP Student

"Learning an instrument has taught me that even if I struggle, to give things another go"

Year 8 PP Student

Reflections

In conversations with Pupil Premium students I was surprised that learning an instrument was often considered something 'other children' do. Many doubted their family would support them, so it was important to establish parental 'buy in' from the start. By writing personalised letters explicitly pointing out the wider benefits of musical education, we have established parental support which will hopefully encourage regular practice at home and students' attendance to lessons. The new instrumental students are clearly excited about their new skill, which is having an effect on the wider school population. I hope to harness this enthusiasm to encourage further involvement in extra-curricular ensembles, now including a wider range of instruments by re-establishing players of 'minority' instruments.

Schools are given tremendous freedom in how they choose to spend their Pupil Premium allocation, and cultural activities are proven to be extremely beneficial educationally. I would encourage all cultural leaders to explore PP funding possibilities within their setting to give the disadvantaged students in their care the best possible access to cultural opportunities.

Summary

"Having the opportunity to study and explore music isn't a privilege, it's a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum."

Nick Gibb MP, School Standards Minister

As a cultural leader, I have learned the importance of keeping up to date with the latest research; this knowledge can empower you as you seek to improve your cultural offer. Reading about the positive impact of the arts for disadvantaged children motivated me to explore whether we had equality of uptake in school. On establishing that we did not, I made an action plan which will hopefully have an impact on PP students' entire education. I am surprised and pleased that the impact has been wider than expected, and that instrumental study in a wide range of instruments is thriving at Sacred Heart.

Providing a sustainable, broad and balanced cultural themed curriculum

Mary Richardson, Greenland Primary School

After being given the role as Arts lead in the school and beginning a journey of understanding the role and its place in education, it became evident to me that something I have taken for granted from my own childhood, is not as freely accessible to the children in today's society be it from social deprivation or the busyness of everyday life. The Cultural Learning Alliance quote that stuck out for me was:

"The arts empower children. Access to the arts and culture is access to our national life, and it the universal right of every child. Children and families who feel ownership of the arts and culture feel more confident in their ability to create, challenge and explore, to be part of a society and to make change happen"

Most children at Greenland Community Primary school come from a socially deprived background where emotional needs are high from both the parents and the children. The teaching of art is well established within our school and the application for the Artsmark has brought many mini projects or collaborations with schools within our trust. I felt that our next step would be to embed a cultural curriculum so that each child was given an authentic experience to help shape their future, that one experience that could ignite their passion to thrive as an adult.

A Statement of Focus

Following the twilight at the Sunderland Empire and listening to the proposal by Sunderland council, it dawned on me that our school could create a smaller version of this using the knowledge, skills and resources that we already have and build upon it. To embed visits into our curriculum and opportunities to explore our culture more and the cultures of others. I wanted ownership of this project to belong to the staff and children of this school for it to be sustained, if people feel their opinion has been valued it will have more of an impact and more of a chance to survive year on year. After completing my action plan and putting pen to paper I began the process of introducing the idea to the head of school, she in turn thought it was a good idea therefore 'The 50 things to do before you leave Greenland' began.

Development Process

I composed and sent an email to all staff and governors of our school, asking them to think about what they feel are the most relevant experiences every child should have in order to shape them holistically to draw upon their own childhoods and the current economic climate. I received and gathered a variety of responses from all staff and governors of the school. I then went and spoke to the children at pupil parliament. I explained the idea and we explored the National Trust website and talked about their 50 things to do before you are 11 $\frac{3}{4}$, we talked through possible experiences that they had already had and had benefited from and that they think others might enjoy. Working in small groups the children began to compose their own ideas and thoughts, every piece of paper was full with a variety of ideas, some a little idealistic but most of them were definitely doable.

Sitting with everyone's ideas I then began looking for the frequency of ideas, looking for recurring themes and collating the information together. I then began composing my own list, from this list I then started talking with individual teachers about what they were passionate about with regards to embedding a broad and balanced curriculum, what would inspire and benefit the year group that they currently teach. Everyone had their individual responses to what they felt was the greater need within their year group. Following this, I then spoke to foundation leads about the idea of having 8 main threads per year group linked to the National Curriculum foundation subjects therefore providing opportunities that are maintainable and actually not above and beyond current curriculum needs, with the intention that it is not an extra to the timetable but something that works in harmony. We discussed about taking away the whole idea of set weeks being laid aside for science, arts or history which could sometimes inconvenience topics being taught

but that these ideas were inserted to each year group to implement at a suitable time in that year groups calendar making it more doable and easier for the year group teachers to organise.

Taking all of this into account I laid out a draft, eight main strands covering the foundation subjects. The first theme would be the project theme for example hold an art exhibition (arts) or to design and make a robot (DT), the second theme offers the children a visit or trip this could be the opportunity to visit a museum (science or history) or to take a walk along a river (geography). The additional six then cover areas of the foundation subjects. The idea is that the two main themes offer the children an opportunity to write about this first-hand experience making it more memorable and the additional 6 just a date and a tick. As you will have gathered this has also gone beyond the 50 most valuable experiences and has now become 101 experiences.

I wanted this to be more than just a tick list, I wanted it to be a document that travels with the children throughout their school career, where they have opportunities to look back as well as forward. Each year group would have 4 pages, the first page would be an aspiration for that year, the next two pages would be opportunities to record their experiences it could take the form of a photograph or writing, the fourth page would hold the additional 6 experiences to be ticked and dated when achieved. The inside covers would hold the additional 45 experiences that belong to a childhood.

This project will begin in September 2019 and the whole school community of Greenland Community Primary will be taking part. As the Cultural White paper of 2016 states:

“Everyone should have the chance to experience culture, participate in it, create it, and see their lives transformed by it.”

A garden project: Linking learning and authenticity in the arts to develop staff and pupil confidence.

Zoe Stephenson, Thornley Primary School

Statement of Focus

After beginning our school Artsmark journey last year, I have been keen to utilise the quality principles document and rebalance the provision for Arts and Culture within my school. It is already evident from 'The Case for Cultural Learning' document that there are life-long benefits to having access to culture; those accessing culture tend to achieve higher. We made a commitment as a staff to make the Arts and culture accessible to all, making the learning journey more authentic and placing pupils in the driving seat. It is the hope that this model for learning will lead to higher levels of engagement and a greater depth of knowledge.

Development of the project

During Summer 1 at our school, we followed a topic based around art, known as the Thornley Art Gallery. This topic was meant as a way of pupils learning about specific artists, chosen by the class teacher, and create pieces of work inspired by what they have learnt. However, in more recent years this topic had become stale and repetitive for both the staff and the pupils, I suggested that we review and move forward this topic, developing it into a holistic and authentic project where pupils could take ownership of learning and take pride in their final pieces. The idea was to develop the topic through a thematic approach, ensuring that pupils learnt in a multi-disciplinary way and could make crucial links between concepts and real-life scenarios. As a staff we settled on a broad overarching theme, in this case 'Gardens', which offers multiple opportunities to use skills from other subjects in planning and developing ideas, as well as having a wide range of artists from different genres to explore.

The end goal for the project is for each year group/key stage to develop a garden site on our school field. Work produced around the theme will be placed on display indoors, turning the school corridors and spaces into a gallery for parents/carers to enjoy. Pupils will need to work together to design, create and curate each element of the project, including the elements of the gardens in preparation for a celebratory garden party, which will see pupils and the community come together at the beginning of Summer 2. To begin with, I met with the Headteacher to put forward the proposal of learning, making small tweaks to the current structure of the topic in order to achieve a greater impact. The idea was underpinned by the 'Achieving Great Art for Everybody' document, in which they float the idea that we should aspire for excellence in everything we do. We scheduled staff meeting time, where I outlined the idea of the topic.

Following the staff meeting, I prepared a bank of images from a range of traditional and contemporary artists, and a loose medium-term plan. Providing a framework for staff and communicating regularly with them also ensured that staff felt supported throughout.

Account of impact

The full impact of the project will not be clear until it is complete, however the impact on staff motivation has been high. Staff are enthusiastic, and up until the point of writing had already taken the learning further than under the old structure of the topic. The array of ideas has been impressive and shows the creative and diversity on offer.



One staff member commented that she was 'so excited and really enjoying the topic.' Other staff have been positive and said that there was a 'buzz' around school. It is evident that there is confidence because of the standard of work being produced. Feedback regarding pupils is that there is a desire to do well and impress, putting more effort into work and reaping the rewards. We continually celebrate these achievements as a school, and pupils are beginning to see the value in culture and the arts.

Recommendations

- Provide a feedback box for pupils to measure impact on their learning. Plans are already in place to document the whole project for display to celebrate
- Review staff skills by revisiting audit of practice at the end of project. Gathering regular feedback has allowed the project to adapt and develop around the needs of the school.
- Have a clear action plan discussed with all staff, and continuously 'check in' for class progress/any support needs.



Overcoming barriers.

Challenge 1: Staff confidence in delivering and planning the arts was low after an audit of skills.

Solution: provide in-house CPD relevant to need and provide an overview plan for the term that staff can follow and manipulate.

Challenge 2: Motivating the pupils to see the arts as valuable.

Solution: Talk about the project in whole school assemblies and celebrate work regularly.

Take steps to develop skills in the classroom to harbour a sense of achievement.

Challenge 3: Time constraints.

Solution: Have regular conversations with staff, provide direction and shared goals but maintain flexibility and work together to develop specific solutions.



Reflections

This is the first year of undertaking such a project in school, and feedback has been wholly positive. Pupils are making crucial links in learning, as proven through constant discussion with staff and work placed on display. We wanted to achieve embedded learning, and we are on the right track. Staff and pupils are more confident and more open-minded about the direction work can go in. One member of staff thought that teaching the arts was becoming 'more holistic and organic' by letting pupils take the lead.

As a Cultural leader, I have achieved more than I thought possible and feel confident enough to continue to develop projects in the future. The journey has let me work with all staff, and value teamwork more highly. It has already set in motion a rethink of the school curriculum offer by the SLT, and I have been asked to contribute towards that.

It began with a question -the journey of The Federation of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs and St Joseph's RC Primary Schools towards A Festival of Culture

Geraldine Yates, The Federation of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs and St Joseph's RC Primary Schools

It began with a question -the journey of The Federation of Our Lady Queen of Martyrs and St Joseph's RC Primary Schools towards A Festival of Culture. "Who would like to be the governor for culture?" And with that question, asked by the Chair of Governors in the Summer meeting, a really interesting journey commenced.

As a Federation (two small primaries, 4 miles apart with a shared head) we were aware that our cultural offer was not strong. A recent Ofsted inspection had confirmed this:

"Governors are aware that leaders' work to support pupils' understanding of cultural diversity in modern Britain needs to improve but there is no plan in place to satisfy themselves how well this is being implemented in future."

We felt that this could equally apply to the SLT-planning for transformative cultural experiences was not effective. So the SLT met in December 2018 to address the issue. We were at an advantage in that the newly-elected Cultural Governor and OLQM's Deputy Head were one and the same person and the new learning gained from participation in the "Cultural Leadership in Education" course (started November 2018) could have a significant impact in the delivery of the cultural offer.

How do we begin?

We discovered that there was no definition of what cultural education meant in the Federation. After much discussion, we decided on the following as our mission statement for cultural education :

"To provide creative, participative or experiential opportunities that allow for transformative experiences which are beyond the every day."

This we felt linked in well with Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

"Every child has the right to relax, play and take part in a wide range of cultural activities."

This was important to us because as a Federation we had recently embarked upon our Rights Respecting Award journey.

After reviewing the situation, we felt that our cultural offer was too insular, focused only on white British culture, not systematically planned for and not consistently providing creative, participative and experiential opportunities for the children which would enable them to appreciate the cultural diversity present in Britain today. We needed to make changes.

Whilst exploring the cultural diversity present in Britain today via the Woodlands Juniors Project Britain page, we discovered that Britain has always had a mixed cultural identity because many different cultures have invaded /settled in this country. We felt we could base an event around the cultures of India, the Caribbean and China as well as exploring the culture of a UK country. A further discussion with the DHT from St Joseph's suggested that dance might be an area for development across the Federation to increase staff confidence in delivering and choreographing dance. This was borne out by the findings from Guskey level 2 staff questionnaires where 90% of staff felt they were reluctant to become involved when dance projects were mentioned , they were unsure and not confident about teaching dance, they didn't know the language and technical aspects of dance well and they didn't consider using dance in other curriculum lessons very often. For us as SLT, it became apparent that teachers had never or only occasionally accessed CPD on Dance, which we felt was a contributory factor in the staff responses.

It seemed that an event involving dance needed to be created. We were mindful that we wanted our cultural offer to be systematically planned for and to consistently provide creative, participative and experiential opportunities for the children. As a Federation, we acknowledge the contribution of Science, English and Maths in our lives through the implementation of Shakespeare Day, Science Day and Number Day so why not acknowledge the immense contribution cultural education makes by organising a Festival of Culture, culminating in each class choreographing and performing a dance from an area of the world that contributes to Britain's cultural diversity?

Over the Christmas break we began to plan and when staff returned in January 2019, we were able to present them with dates for their diaries where a week in each remaining half term had been devoted to working towards our Festival of Culture. The foci were Storytelling, Art, Countries Close-Up (Language/History/Geography) and Dance. A further important addition was the CPD offered by TIN Arts -a local dance group founded in 1999 by professional contemporary dancers Tess Chaytor and Martin Wilson. They believe passionately in the difference arts and dance make to people's lives and seemed a great choice for staff who were unsure about engaging with dance and recognised the need for training.

Where are we now? -the impact

So far, we have completed our Cultural Weeks in Storytelling, Art and Countries Close-Up (Language/History/Geography). The pupil voice samples have all been positive and indicate that we have begun to offer a creative, participative and experiential cultural education which is transforming the way children view their world.

"This is the best day ever!"

Class 3 pupil after creating a willow pattern plate

"I really enjoyed being Anansi -he was a trickster! I didn't know Jamaicans mention Jack Mandora the Keeper of Heaven's Door after each Anansi story. It's so they don't link themselves with the things in the story."

(Class 4 pupil on oral storytelling)

"Wee means little and bannock is bread. It's like The Gingerbread Man."

(Class 2 pupil discussing Class 1's The Wee Bannock story)

Where do we go from here? The next steps

As an SLT, we have decided to run the Festival of Culture biannually following our two year planning cycle Year A and Year B. We intend to focus on a different art form each time so perhaps Music next? During Year B we plan to embark on a Mining Heritage Week and take our older children to London to experience the many cultural opportunities there. We need to further embed training opportunities for staff in art forms; showing an organisational change required at Guskey level 3. Hopefully, staff will feel more confident about dance following the TIN Arts CPD in May.

Three Federation staff have become Arts Award assessors in Explore and Discover. Classes 2 and 3 are working for Explore Award via a Northern Ballet initiative. It is our aim that all children will have the opportunity to work towards an Arts Award at least twice in their time with us.

Final Reflections

I feel we've come a long way since December 2018 and it all started with a simple question!

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