

attain improved school results

We proved that well-structured, in-school arts projects, led by specialist artist practitioners, can help children with SEND.*

communicate better

show improved

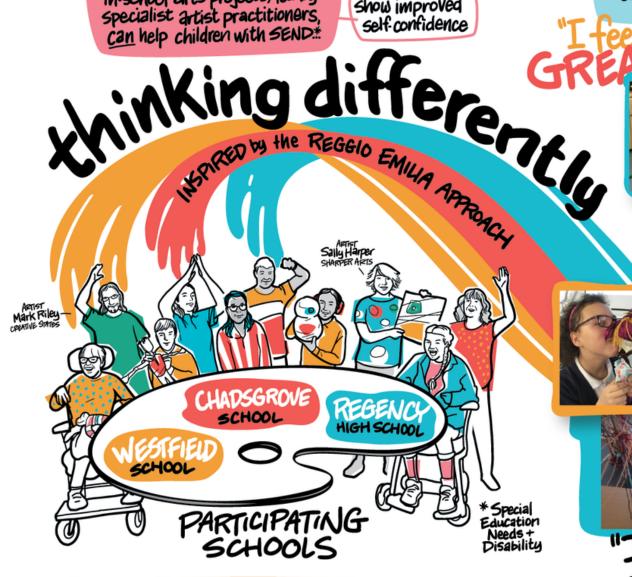
"Thinking Differently has blown expectations totally out of the water with students expected to exceed 'end of year targets'

Lynne Brown, Regency School

"There has been real progress in their communication with each other and with us as the adults in the room. everyone has a voice."

Julia Lloydlangston, Chadsgrove School

"I've definitely seen their self-esteem build over time... which has been really good. Emma Norman, Westfield School





PARTNERS











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Report Authors: Simon Taylor MA, University of Worcester with Liz Elders MA & Dr Penny Hay, House of Imagination

Introduction

Thinking Differently was initially conceived by Meadow Arts as a small-scale project to explore how artists think, new ways of developing creative practice in educational settings and new ways of gathering evidence of the wider benefits of creativity. The project had very clear aims and a remit to explore and test the potential link between how contemporary visual artists express ideas and the way children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) uniquely approach the world.

Initially it posed the question: can well-structured, in-school arts projects, led by specialist artist practitioners, help children with SEND attain improved school results, communicate better and show improved self-confidence?

Thinking Differently generated tangible evidence of real impact in these areas and others as detailed in this report. Despite major disruption to the project due to changes in partner schools, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, it became apparent during the project that both participants and staff were benefitting in positive and unexpected ways. These participants were a neurodiverse group of children and young people based in three specialist SEND [1] schools in the West Midlands, some with social, emotional, and mental health issues, some with Autism Spectrum Disorder and others with severe or complex learning difficulties or physical disabilities and complex health needs. All three settings had experienced teachers or art specialists, but as education practitioners they received little or no subject-specific or arts-based professional development and were working with pupils who all face barriers engaging with the traditional curriculum.

The project also encouraged the key partners to 'think differently' about partnership itself and the sharing of expertise between cultural organisations, higher education institutes (HEIs), teachers and practicing artists.

Background and Project Partners

Meadow Arts

Meadow Arts has over 20 years experience bringing ambitious and inspiring contemporary art to unexpected rural places. As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation, it also has an educational remit and has worked in schools since 2004, launching its education programme, Meadow Arts Inspires, in 2014. It has placed professional artists in classrooms across the West Midlands, to deliver bespoke arts-education projects for students and staff. Between April 2017- March 2019 Meadow Arts reached 1100 pupils. The organisation hoped to gain deeper understanding of how to gather evidence and evaluation by working with all partners on this project. Meadow Arts' long term aim is to increase regional stakeholders' recognition of the work it does and to become sector leaders in this area by providing models of best practice.

Executive Director, Clare Purcell, developed the original bid, effective communications with project partners and the all-important and evolving relationship with the funder, Paul Hamlyn Foundation. Steve Wilson, former Education and Engagement Manager, provided the original inspiration for the project and established links with regional partner schools and undertook monitoring visits.

House of Imagination

House of Imagination is an arts research charity that works in partnership with educators and artists, and with museums, galleries, theatres, and other artistic and cultural organisations. House of Imagination invites children and young people to collaborate with creative professionals through co-enquiry; it is a home for research and imagination and a place to make creativity visible in learning; creates places and spaces to research, share and celebrate the power of imagination in children's lives.

The charity aims to support children's exploration, communication, and expression of creative ideas and to develop creative skills for life; provide integrated training and mentoring for educators, artists and cultural centres; and support the dissemination of research and guidance on creative values, relationships, dispositions and environments in order to help develop

children as confident, creative thinkers. As an organisation, House of Imagination is committed to ensuring services are inclusive and meet the needs of all members of the community. The public benefits of the work of House of Imagination include supporting creativity in the classroom, enhancing the learning and social skills of children and making teachers and schools more confident in developing to improve learning outcomes.

Artist Kirsty Claxton, Mentor Liz Elders and Director of Research Dr Penny Hay, worked with colleagues on this project, to deepen thinking, challenge perceptions and stimulate change.

University of Worcester

The University of Worcester's School of Education specialise in teacher professional development and the academic study of education. It provides the Postgraduate level National Award for SEN Co-ordinators and has a longstanding track record of undertaking research into special educational needs and disabilities. Recent projects include EU-funded support for secondary school teachers working with pupils with

learning needs, University lecturers working with students with learning needs and disabilities, and research into antibullying strategies in primary schools including special schools. Its experts have broad experience of project and research activity including evaluation and assessing impact.

Two education specialists with different areas of expertise were invited to form the Evaluation Team; Professor Richard Woolley is an expert on education and social inclusion and barriers children and young people face to accessing opportunities. Simon Taylor has a background in arts and cultural organisations and working with artists, he is particularly interested in creativity and the value of cultural learning in schools.



Artists

Sally Harper

Sally has 20 years experience of delivering high quality workshops working with textiles, mixed media, sculpture, recycled materials, and the outdoor environment. With a degree in embroidery, her teaching background includes adult evening classes, many community projects, and festivals but most of all working in children's centres, primary and secondary schools. Sally has a keen interest in early education and is very much influenced by Reggio Emilia after a visit in 2004 and by the practice of forest school education in Scandinavia

Mark Riley

Mark is a Community Artist, and since graduating with a BA (Hons) in Visual Arts & Art History in 1993 has worked in a variety of settings with diverse participants and partners, including schools, children's centres schools, play care and within the community. In 2012 he qualified as a Level 3 Forest School Leader. His practice is process-led, and revolves around helping people think, make sense of where they are and provide an opportunity to express this. This has increasingly involved exploring

creativity and thinking through making. In the educational context Mark has investigated teaching for thinking, using child-led open-ended activities to encourage creative and critical thinking.

Fliss O'Neill

Ceramic artist and creative practitioner Fliss O'Neill joined the project having led several successful short-term projects for Meadow Arts in Herefordshire schools. Being based in the county, she was well-placed to lead the project at Westfield School. However, like so many freelance artists, she was forced to find alternative work when her other freelance arts contracts abruptly ended as the Covid-19 pandemic set-in.

She became a care support worker for an elderly member of her community. She had to put that person's health needs first and thus withdrew from the project. This was not atypical of the kinds of life /professional decisions many people faced at the time and was one of several challenges the project had to overcome as it developed.

Thinking Differently was an opportunity for these artists to develop their own practice and broaden their experience working in specialist educational settings.

Schools

Westfield School, Leominster, Herefordshire

Westfield School is a maintained Special School for over 60 pupils with severe or complex learning difficulties aged 2-19 years. It is situated in the rural market town of Leominster, in North Herefordshire. This area is widely known to have a low socio-economic index, high levels of poverty, poor access to job opportunities, arts, or culture and all the social /community disadvantages associated with those issues. The school's catchment area covers Herefordshire, Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Powys. The project worked with pupils from Robin Class (top end KS 2 to KS 3) and Class Teacher, Emma Norman.

Chadsgrove Special Education School, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire

A Special School for pupils aged 2–19 years which accepts pupils with sensory impairments and mild, moderate, severe, or specific learning difficulties in addition to physical disabilities. Most pupils have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and Chadsgrove has maintained 'outstanding' status by Ofsted since

2012. Thinking Differently worked closely with Upper School Teacher, Julia Lloyd-Langston.

Regency High School, Worcester

Based in the Warndon area of Worcester, this school caters for pupils with moderate, severe and complex learning difficulties aged between 11 and 19. All pupils at Regency High School must have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) and the school provides a caring, supportive and challenging environment that is designed to provide a broad and stimulating curriculum and to foster the independence of the students. Thinking Differently worked with Class Teacher, Lynne Brown.







Paul Hamlyn Foundation

Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) is one of the largest independent grant-makers in the UK. Its vision is for 'a just society in which everyone, especially young people, can realise their full potential and enjoy fulfilling and creative lives': www.phf.org.uk

PHF Arts-Based Learning 'Explore & Test' Fund

PHF awarded Meadow Arts funding in 2019 to 'explore and test' the theory that contemporary visual artists have the capacity to unlock hidden potential in children with SEND by virtue of their often-unconventional way of viewing the world, using art to address topical issues. Meadow Arts specifically wanted to explore the notion that contemporary visual artists can help children with SEND attain improved school results, communicate better and show improved self-esteem. However, experience showed that projects in SEND schools would have greater impact if a longerterm approach was adopted with more pupil-practitioner contact days delivered over a longer period (see 'Continual

artistic intervention over a longer period' on page 10.)

Role of PHF Mentor

PHF assigned to the project an Evaluation Mentor, Hannah Wilmot. Meadow Arts were given two days of her time and at the outset, Clare Purcell spent half a day with her learning about the Theory of Change and other projects nation-wide which could be used as helpful case study examples of embedding evaluation and reflective practice into the project. As it turned out, Meadow Arts did not need to call on Hannah much due to the level of support and expertise offered by the project partners at University of Worcester and the House of Imagination. However, Hannah generously remained on 'stand-by' and waited over two years to read the final report and offer feedback.







Project outline

Initially conceived as a 2-year project, the research spanned from Autumn 2019 to Spring 2022 due to Covid-19. All the partners and participants came together at the beginning of the research activity, at appropriate points throughout, and towards the end. These sessions encompassed professional development based upon key underpinning concepts, to share on-going research, for reflection, discussion and as part of the on-going formative evaluation process.

Artists had 24 days per school across the project which included work with children, young people, and educators; for reflection time with educators and project documentation; participation in professional development and evaluation sessions; and dissemination work in schools. Artists and educators (teachers and teaching assistants) worked together weekly wherever possible to sustain the co-enquiries with the children and young people.

Artist, teacher, school partnerships

Westfield School

January to March 2020: teacher Emma Norman, artist Fliss O'Neill January to May 2021: teacher Emma Norman, artist Sally Harper

Project focus:

To build confidence and skills within the group, to allow them to make decisions about what they would like to do and how they're going to do it. Break down barriers and previous interpretations about art and creativity, allowing for openness to explore and experiment.

Chadsgrove Special Education School

January to February 2020: teacher Julia Lloyd-Langston, artist Sally Harper September 2021 to March 2022: teacher Julia Lloyd-Langston, artist Sally Harper

Project focus

Working with the group to see what they enjoy and how we can develop a relationship through materials and techniques. Not imposing ideas and allowing space for their thought processes and time to develop.

Regency High School

January to July 2021: teacher Lynne Brown, artist Mark Riley

Project focus

To develop processes that work with the young people's communication (with us and each other) and self-confidence, bespoke to the young people. To explore the integration of the students back into school as a whole class. To establish a relationship and connect with the young people, researching them and coproducing incrementally.

Research design and key concepts underpinning the research

Continual artistic intervention over a longer period

Meadow Arts wanted to pilot a long-term approach to projects in schools and with SEND pupils. Through careful consideration and planning this project developed the following aims:

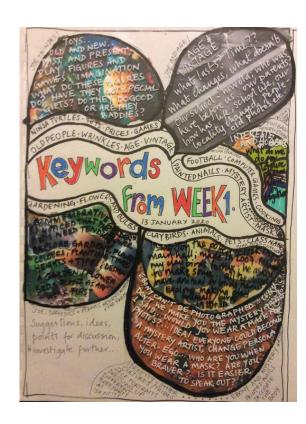
- pupils and practitioners to build stronger relationships over an extended time
- practitioners, teachers, and external experts to analyse project impact using more considered approaches
- time for reflective evaluation, creating opportunities to adapt /refine delivery methods

This project would, it was hoped, provide Meadow Arts with an important opportunity to be at the centre of an exciting collaboration between existing and new partners, from which it could learn, share, and use the findings to inform future work and that of other arts organisations.

Connecting Artists & Teachers: the dynamic

A key element of the project was the continuing professional development (CPDL) that was embedded throughout to provide a framework for the creative coenquiry that was taking place. The model used was that of whole day or twilight sessions, facilitated by House of Imagination (HOI) and hosted by The University of Worcester (UW). HOI introduced key concepts and the importance of the Creative-Reflective Cycle as a process (see below). The first of four CPDL Days took place in December 2019 at UW and was opened to a wider range of practicing artists beyond the project artists who had been recruited via an interview process. These attendees were all part of Meadow Arts' Creative Practitioner Network. A practical workshop element provided the opportunity to explore the key process of co-enquiry, how individuals make personal connections between objects and how each of us develop unique ways of seeing the world. This modelled the process of supporting neurodiverse pupils with their emerging questions, interests and obsessions or lines of

enquiry, and discovering less obvious themes that might emerge through conversation and dialogue.



House of Imagination Concepts, with reference to Reggio Emilia

House of Imagination explored and supported the understanding of Key Concepts through Professional Development sessions with artists and educators and mentoring across the project.

A key concept of House of Imagination places children and young people at the heart of a creative 'listening pedagogy' (Rinaldi, 2006) as co-creators, and co-enquirers. This is a collaborative learning approach that helps develop critical thinking and communication skills. Crucially, it places value on the process of learning rather than pre-defined outcomes (Bancroft et al., 2008).

Value is given to the image of the child and that of the educators as strong, capable, and rich in potential, which references values held and lived out in the world-famous Pre-schools and Infant Toddler Centres of Reggio Emilia [2], Italy (Rinaldi, 2006). Democratic and companionable relationships between children and young people, educators, and artists are a vital focus in House of Imagination's research, where everyone is seen as co-protagonists, co-researchers, and co-learners (Bancroft et al., 2008). Importance is also placed on the development of creative learning environments that support children's creative dispositions, habits of mind, lifelong and life-wide learning, their search for making meaning and children's well-being (ibid).

The professional development and research placed particular focus on the role of the arts and what colleagues in Reggio Emilia refer to as the Hundred Languages (Edwards et al., 2012); to explore the research question of how the visual arts can support SEND children and young people to explore and express themselves in their own unique ways.

[2] The Pre-schools and Infant Toddler Centres of Reggio Emilia, northern Italy: an education based upon values. The values and principles at the core of their educational experience include: their image of the child as strong and rich in potential; democratic & reciprocal relationships; The Rights of the Child as a citizen; a pedagogy of listening; teacher as researcher and The Hundred Languages of Children. (Rinaldi, 2006; Edwards et al., 2012)

The Creative-Reflective Cycle and Pedagogical Documentation

Key to House of Imagination research and development is the concept of reflection, exchange, and dialogue (Bancroft et al., 2008) throughout and with the whole research group (educators, schools, artists, and the core teams from House of Imagination, Meadow Arts, and University of Worcester).

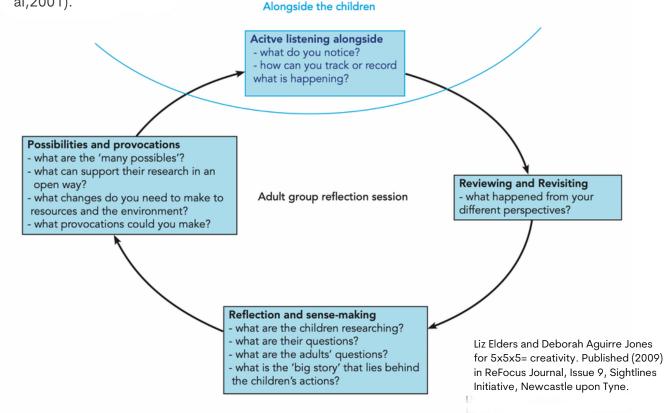
House of Imagination supported the development and integration of a creative and reflective pedagogy with research at the heart of the process. The idea of a Creative- Reflective Cycle (Aguirre, Jones and Elders, 2009) was introduced and explored by the research participants. This process involves the sharing of qualitative evidences (observations, photos, video) and perspectives (young people, educators, and artists); educators and artists reflecting together on these (after each session) to analyse, interpret and hypothesise in order to gain deeper pedagogical understandings; the collaborative generation of creative possibilities, and the co-construction of creative proposals to offer to the children/young people in the following session. This process also gave greater insights for all the participants at

professional development sessions when colleagues from different settings came together to reflect on their learning with the core team.

Drawing upon the practices in Reggio Emilia and House of Imagination (Bancroft et al., 2008) pedagogical documentation was explored in order to capture the different voices, qualitative evidences and to 'make learning visible' (Guidici et al, 2001).

The object is to provide evidence for change and help to build a strong cultural ecology that in turn supports children, schools, and creative professionals.

The key concepts above underpinned the research to provide the children and young people with more opportunities to develop their creativity and to experiment and to provide teachers more support to integrate these skills.



Keeping evaluation variables to a minimum

The project and evaluation team acknowledged the potential difficulties in measuring impact in the three key areas (raised attainment, improved communication skills, improved self-confidence) as progress in these areas may not be attributable to the artistic interventions alone and there was variation between the three schools in terms of 'context specificity' (Eisner, 1998). It was decided to try and establish some baseline data using:

- P-Scales, pre-National Curriculum levels with descriptors used to monitor progress and achievement of pupils with SEND
- SOLAR, an online pupil assessment tracker for SEND children that enables easy recording of pupil progress for assessment frameworks

(See Appendices for details of Pupil Baseline Data).

Teachers monitored progress on a termly basis and all data was anonymised to ensure confidentiality and that no pupil could be identified. In addition to this quantitative data, qualitative feedback from the class teachers and artists also

showed evidence of real progress in these areas (see below and Appendices).





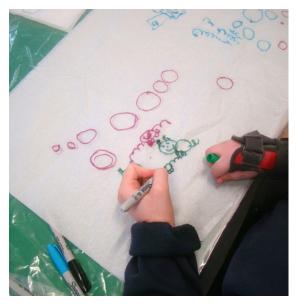


Impact and Outcomes

Impact and outcomes are covered in the report in 3 sections: issues and challenges, the key themes that emerged; and meeting project aims.

Thinking Differently had positive impacts in numerous and often unexpected areas – these emerging themes are outlined below. These are shown alongside qualitative evidence of how the project met its aims in terms of raising the attainment of children with SEN, improving their communication skills and helping develop their self-confidence.







Issues & Challenges

Change of partner schools and project artists.

This project faced logistical and planning challenges in terms of changes to key partners during the delivery stage. One of the original partner schools withdrew from the project and a replacement had to be found at short notice. One of the three original project artists recruited at the outset also withdrew from the project for personal reasons (outlined above). It was decided that the work would be offered to the remaining two project artists, rather than delay delivery with another round of recruitment. Fortunately, another suitable partner SEN school in the region agreed to come on board and Meadow Arts was able to adapt its plan for delivery accordingly in consultation with the funder, Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Impact of Covid-19: practical reality of delivery during a global pandemic.

Like all cultural, creative and educational projects, delivery of Thinking Differently was severely disrupted in March 2020 due to the first national lockdown. Feedback from artists and teachers revealed both positive and negative aspects of this experience. There was,

without doubt, a six-month break in continuity due to national lockdowns and on return to school, classes were working in 'bubbles' which severely restricted staff movements, student interactions and access to materials. The wellbeing of teachers also became a concern during this time of unprecedented stress and the switch to 'emergency online teaching' combined with home learning. However, educator Julia (Chadsgrove) talked about the opportunity to re-connect with her artistic practice and as the specialist art teacher she created a sketchbook of weekly ideas to share with the pupils to inspire them at home during lockdown remote learning. When key worker and vulnerable children returned, Julia and the pupils co-produced a weekly newsletter 'The Chadsgrove Chronicle' for the school, including an art gallery of pupils' work and an 'artist' and 'picture of the week'. On general return to the classroom, Thinking Differently enabled educators to better respond to a changed classroom culture and Julia also noted that the artist-teacher relationships were influencing culture in the school in a positive way. Julia commented on the 'imaginative conversations' she was having with colleagues. Sally (artist) also

reflected on this experience saying she had learnt the 'importance of adaptability and dealing with unknowns'.

Difficulty establishing benchmarks/baseline data.

This proved problematic for the evaluation team as consistency across the partners was not always possible – it became apparent that different schools were recording pupil progress in different ways. Interruptions to project delivery (see above), changes in pupil groups and staggered start/finish dates for each setting meant more variables were inevitably being introduced in terms of the learner experience. However, despite these caveats, there is clear evidence in the data of progress because of the project and the impact of the artist/educator interventions (see below).

Assumptions and openness to new approaches.

It became apparent during delivery that some of the educators and indeed artists were not as aware of Reggio Emilia concepts as had first been assumed by the project team. These newly adopted

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approaches, whilst common within early years settings, created uncomfortable levels of challenge with some individuals in a high school setting and it must be acknowledged that increased levels of support were necessary in this situation. Indeed, Thinking Differently challenged the very status of pupils in schools, viewing children as artists and celebrating their uniqueness. Lynne (educator) highlighted how deep a challenge this was for some of her colleagues and commented, 'we need to educate our educators...'. Artist Mark reflected that some older pupils struggled to generate their own ideas - his approach was to 'support and challenge' - pushing the children without doing things for them not taking over but supporting to the point of achievement. He also encouraged the teaching assistants (TAs) in doing the same. The artists' approach was about finding the capability and strengths of each child, unlocking each child's potential. This can be buried quite deep in older children / young people and the motivation to want to learn also changes over time. Other children became 'stuck' in the sense that they started to rely on repetitive activities that had become comfortable over time. At Chadsgrove

the artist and educator addressed this reluctance to experiment by deliberately removing items / materials and replacing them with new ones, encouraging pupils to expand their creativity.

School expectations / pressures.

It must also be acknowledged that not all schools view opportunities offered by outside agencies and arts organisations in the same way or are able to capitalise on opportunities due to internal pressures. For some it is an opportunity to enrich the curriculum and children's cultural capital through new experiences and contact with outside professionals (process over product), for others it is a chance to produce a discrete outcome that meets a particular school agenda (product over process), whilst in the worst-case scenario, it is seen merely as an opportunity to release teachers from the classroom so they can catch up with their PPA (planning, preparation and assessment), rather than a chance to offer much needed expertise and subjectspecific professional development for them to grow as individuals. It became apparent during Thinking Differently that classroom-based educators do not always have the

freedom to choose which of these scenarios play out during a project and so arts organisations must manage expectations and agree project aims with Headteachers and Senior Leadership Teams at the outset. Meadow Arts asked schools to sign Partnership Agreements clarifying their responsibilities, and made regular monitoring visits to check on progress, to support and to challenge if necessary.

It is worth noting that one year on from the March 2020 Covid Pandemic Lockdowns, PHF offered project participants additional opportunities via the Covid-19 Support Fund. Meadow Arts worked with each artist and each school to create extra mutually agreed side-projects. Each bespoke project was realised in Spring / Summer 2021 and while they did not fit with the central ethos of Thinking Differently they achieved additional outcomes, keeping the artist-teacherpupil relationships 'alive' in on-going lockdowns and during a time when the main project timeline was disrupted; gave the schools and pupils a positive, lighthearted and creative focus as a welcome distraction during a difficult time; they increased awareness / visibility about the project, PHF and Meadow Arts amongst the wider school communities and beyond; benefitted other pupils in addition to those in the core groups and complemented Meadow Arts wider educational remit to create high quality art opportunities for everyone.





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Emergent Key Themes

Throughout the project qualitative evidence in the form of recorded observations, reflective discussions, and pedagogical documentation were collected by the whole team. These were analysed to distil the emerging themes evident in the research groups. These are outlined below with examples and quotes from the participants.

• Creative Learning Environments.

At Westfield School the usual 1 hr lesson was expanded to a full morning to create more time and space for creative coenquiry. The learning environments gave more freedom for exploring possibilities. Julia (educator, Chadsgrove) talked about it being 'liberating', a space for 'freedom of choice' and it being 'empowering'. Sally (artist) was interested in creating immersive spaces for children and young people but reflected upon how trust needed to be built with the children before changing the environment dramatically. Although transforming spaces was challenging, all the artists and educators talked about experimenting with different spaces and layouts to support the use of resources and materials, allow the young people to

move around more freely, support the young people's enquiries and different ways of working. Regency artist Mark, and educator Lynne, reflected on how these spaces allowed for 'crossfertilisation of ideas' between the children. Creative learning environments were co-constructed where co-enquiry could thrive, and 'time, space, and attention' (Duckett and Drummond, 2009) were given by educators and artists that would 'inspire and provoke questions, aspirations and excitement' (Chadsgrove).

• Co-enquiry, co-design.

Exploring differently together; Ownership of learning; Trusting in the children's ideas. Artists and educators reflected on their explorations of doing things differently and the resulting change to ownership of learning. Lynne (educator, Regency) reflected on how the children and young people were not expected to do the usual art class work and that the emphasis was put back on the young people to think about what they wanted to do. 'This has required trust to be built, some have taken to it better than others. Some are really developing an independence and free thinking and a

realisation that it's fine to try things. This is quite a change in classroom culture.'
Changes in communication, sharing ideas, and ownerships of learning were also noticed at Westfield.

"At first, they were very quiet, and they didn't know how to react, but now they have relaxed and are happy working in their own ways with the materials available and are adding to their own personal sketchbooks."

Trust in the children's capabilities and ideas was commented on by Julia (educator, Chadsgrove): 'They feel like they have ownership of their own learning'. The project approach encouraged the young people to codesign their own learning and supported and followed them through the process.

Relationships and Collaboration.

Artists and educators developed 'strong collaborative partnerships' (Regency). The focus at Chadsgrove was on coleadership and co-design: 'as an artist and teacher working in the same space we discover and share different aspects of the learning process' (Chadsgrove). Mark, and Lynne (Regency) made the roles of artist and educator part of their focus of enquiry: exploring their roles as adults alongside the young people, the level of support they gave the children or young people, and how they made 'sensitive interventions', reflecting on 'how much and when'? They also observed how children worked alongside each other but took notice of what each other were doing. One boy developed 'a co-creative bond' with another.

Connection and reconnection.

Participants reflected upon how this approach had supported the children and young people to reconnect with school, whole class and education, post remote learning from home, and how it had supported social interaction, group dynamics and well-being. 'We are using this opportunity to integrate our young

people back into full time education' (Regency). There was evidence of improved social interactions and group dynamics. Creative opportunities for reconnecting and re-socialising after lockdown was described by educator Julia (Chadsgrove) as 'a joyous thing'.

Children's connection to out of school interests and popular culture was also a reoccurring theme. The young people were seen to be 'animated about their outside interests' and the adults were not judgemental about their interest in popular culture. (Chadsgrove). Westfield also recognised the significance of reconnection after lockdown and connection to the familiar where the young people really responded to things they recognised in terms of making art.



Pedagogical documentation and making learning visible.

All the participants reflected and commented upon the importance of pedagogical documentation tools and processes (the collection, collation, and interpretation of photographs, recording conversations, videos, observations, reflections) to document the young people's enquiry. At Regency all staff working alongside the young people contributed to the shared collection of documentary evidence through a publishing programme. These became part of the Creative -Reflective Cycle (see above). 'These narratives inform us of the intentions of the young people and how we can support and inspire them further on their journeys. What techniques and processes to offer next and the skills and confidence they gain from these' (Westfield).

The collated documentation could be used to review and refresh memories with the young people; to spark new ideas and allow them to continually reflect (Chadsgrove). Individual sketchbooks and a large documentation book were created that 'everyone could add to' (Chadsgrove). Sketchbooks

became a space where young people could add their ideas, photos and works they created that they wanted to keep. 'They are very proud of these books and enjoy showing them to other students and members of staff' (Emma, Westfield). Regency experimented with and adapted how the young people could revisit, review, and reconnect with previous sessions as not all the students engaged with the use of large, shared sketchbooks. Regency educator and artist explored different methods e.g. a PowerPoint, blog, working wall (documentation not display) of sharing the pedagogical documentation and making learning visible and asked themselves - 'what is the purpose for the documentation and who is the audience?' (Regency).

The collation of the documentation was used in various forms to share Thinking Differently with different audiences and to make the learning visible. Westfield made presentations at virtual school assemblies; Chadsgrove shared documentation with other school staff through the Intranet and a professional development session on documentation. Using visual narratives, the individual

sketchbooks and works made (collages, prints, sculptures), Westfield showed 'how the group have progressed in skill and confidence' and their 'progression of ideas and techniques.' The level of engagement of staff and senior management varied across the schools. Emma (Westfield) was in weekly communication with the Headteacher and other educators in the school. Regency engaged families and carers with the young people's co-enquiries 'inviting photos of important people, objects, times to be sent'. Parents showed their interest through the shared diaries.

Creative dispositions.

Unlocking children's potential including communication (verbal and non-verbal). Chadsgrove reflected on how ownership of learning had increased the young people's focus: 'feedback suggested that because the group were working with their own ideas, they were much more focused'. They also noticed increased confidence in sharing ideas, and in the use and skilfulness of handling materials. Their behaviour improved and they needed less adult intervention. Westfield noticed how the young people were able to communicate their

preferences, were more able to choose, to communicate, and that there were no behaviour issues in these sessions.

All the educators and artists observed greater communication. Julia (educator, Chadsgrove) said the children were more relaxed when in the process of making and there was 'lots of talking together'. 'One girl talks more than anywhere else in school'. She noticed more exchange between children including using the dolls they created through which to talk to each other. At Chadsgrove the artist and educator saw how the young people communicated with each other freely, sharing about themselves, friends, and family, during the making process. Lynne (educator, Regency) believes that Thinking Differently has 'blown expectations totally out of the water,' with students expected to exceed 'end of year targets'.

• The Power of the arts; '100 languages' [3]; and the use of intelligent materials.

Materials, tools, and processes supported the young people to work, explore and interact in different ways (Westfield). The term 'intelligent

materials' refers to those that have the potential to speak for themselves and these allowed the children and young people to explore ways to express themselves and their ideas (Emma & Sally, Westfield). The use and significance of the use of intelligent materials were commented upon by all the artists and educators. They have 'played a big part in shaping the project' (Chadsgrove).

The use of different expressive languages through which to enquire, supported the young people at Westfield (with artist Fliss) to explore identity playfully. They transformed themselves and tried out different versions of themselves. At Chadsgrove, sculpting paper figures 'became a catalyst and sparked off other interests that we progressed with - they wanted to draw and paint and add collage to their sketchbooks'. The power of the arts for learning was evident across Thinking Differently. Emma (educator, Westfield) saw the arts as wider than painting and drawing. Children and young people also began to see themselves as artists (Westfield). Themes, such as identity and relationships, significant to the children and young people and to their well-being were explored through the power of the

arts. It also supported the pupils' social and emotional needs. Project artists and educators reported seeing the rebuilding of confidence and children and young people working through anxieties postlockdown. There emerged a better attitude to learning - a 'growth mindset' rather than a 'fixed' outlook (Dweck, 2017) and an emerging ability to be receptive to learning again, a form of creative 'recovery curriculum'. Artist Mark described this as 'a transitional experience' for the children as they were making sense of where they are at that moment.

"[It] has blown expectations totally out of the water, with students expected to exceed end of year targets".

Lynne, Regency

[3] "As human beings, children possess a hundred languages, a hundred ways of thinking and expressing themselves, of understanding, and encountering other, with a way of thinking that creates connections between the various dimensions of experience rather than separating them." Reggio Children.

Creative reflective practice; developing lines of enquiry.

Artists and educators showed commitment to collaborative creative reflective practice, carving out time after each session to reflect together. They demonstrated the use of a Creative-Reflective Cycle: 'Main points of the session are discussed, with what worked well, or not, discussed too. Interpretations are made with decisions on next steps, what are the questions we want to pose, what are our theories to test ... are we testing our interpretations and theories? It informs how and when to support young people in the next sessions, proposing groups to work together, how to support self-initiated enquiries, processes, and materials to use.' (Regency).

Participants used the processes and strategies of reflecting together to identify emerging threads to work with (Westfield). At Regency the continuity of enquiry around 'self-identity emerged from threads seen in the work being done, but also reflecting on how the students are relating to each other and to the return from lockdown'.

Educators and artists questioned and researched the motivations behind children's fascinations (Regency).
Reflection together with the young people was also an important factor in determining techniques, ideas, and processes to be offered to the group each week (Chadsgrove).

Valuing uncertainty.

Thinking Differently encouraged educators and pupils to put themselves in the mindset of 'thinking and acting like artists' (Ofsted, 2009, p.11), developing a sense of adventure as they headed into the unknown, trusting the process and using creative dispositions that include: following lines of enquiry; the importance of taking risks through experimentation, trial and error; learning through play ('serious playfulness'); encouraging openended questions; being comfortable with ambiguity; knowing that 'it's ok not to know...'; valuing multiple perspectives and different voices; observing rather than teaching. The challenge for educators was their multi-faceted role and perhaps uncertain status, being at once both inside and outside the process, as artist / facilitator / recorder/observer.



Meeting Project Aims

The main outcomes for pupils; artists and educators; the arts organisation and Higher Education Institute are summarised below. Findings were drawn from this evidence, and group discussions, as well as individual conversations with artists and teachers involved.

For pupils.

There was clear evidence of some pupils making above expected progress in terms of:

1. Raised attainment

One artist reflected on how they had cocreated a 'a safe space to experiment and to try new things', the access to different materials and techniques resulting in the children and young people 'exploring for themselves rather than any pre-conceived ideas'. Sally, artist (Westfield).

- 2. Improved communication skills
- 3. Improved self-confidence

"In terms of art, all children made good or outstanding progress. This isn't necessarily reflected in other subject areas.
They all learnt new skills and experienced new techniques and processes".

Lynne, educator (Regency)

"Some of the pupils became more independent as the project progressed and irrespective of amount of adult direction, all were more confident in their attitude as they knew that...they had the opportunity to explore their own creative ideas if they wanted to."

Lynne, educator (Regency)

"Although we have this room of wonderful stuff, we're getting better at the small stuff, the hand-eye coordination, they want to do the small details."

Julia, educator (Chadsgrove)

"Definitely confidence has grown ... I've seen their self-esteem build over the time as well which has been really good."

Emma, educator (Westfield)

"Once we get the message through that you can't ever be wrong with what you're making then it starts to be really beneficial and it starts to build confidence. But there is a bit of a barrier to get over that we've experienced in this project because in the rest of their school life there are a lot of rights and wrongs."

Julia, educator (Chadsgrove)

in their communication with each other and with us as the adults in the room. We have seen more signing, use of symbols, VOCA machines and vocalising. Through this multi communication approach, everyone is included, and everyone has a voice."

Julia, educator (Chadsgrove)

"They're working together doing joint things, especially engaging more with each other and communicating more with each other."

Emma, educator (Westfield)

"Definitely confidence has grown ... I've definitely seen their self-esteem build over the time as well which has been really good." Emma, educator (Westfield) "XY's target was to slow
down speech so he is
understood - I saw how well
he communicated with his
peers when asked to
interview them about their
work using the iPad".
Lynne, educator (Regency)



(See Appendix 2: Schools Pupil Data)

For artists and educators

The project, whilst perhaps not producing radical change to their practice, did help to embed approaches, empowering educators and giving the confidence to make the case for the value of the arts in schools and creative approaches to the curriculum.

Artist Mark described this process as bringing 'new ingredients for a classroom culture', providing inspiration and ideas so 'the spark comes back'- for long-serving teachers this can diminish over time.

Artist Sally also introduced what might be termed transgressive activities or 'teaching to transgress' (Hooks, 1994). These provocations included: inking on tables; whole-school interventions and installations; exploring the idea of the environment as educator, 'everywhere is art and creativity' (Julia, educator), and 'wow!' moments; encouraging teachers to be bolder and broadening their creative horizons - essentially helping educators deal with their own self-imposed constraints and fear of failure.

"Working alongside Sally has been an amazing experience. We bounced thoughts and ideas off each other and she gave me the confidence to be much freer with my approach to art teaching as a whole. She taught me to trust the pupils and go with their creative directions. We as facilitators, the pupils as the creators. Sally's confident, calm, brave approach has also helped the teaching assistants to trust in the pupil's creative direction. As we have been allowed a whole morning time slot, we have all been able to take time and step back occasionally to watch the work grow and take shape... I feel braver now... I feel empowered."

Julia, educator (Chadsgrove).

"I feel more confident generally in my teaching through this project so it's filtered through the whole school, the benefits we are seeing here." Julia, educator (Chadsgrove). "It has confirmed my view that as an art specialist we should have an invaluable role to play in children's education and that the learning climate... where there were two art specialists with very different skills, but similar values (it) benefitted them greatly."

Lynne, educator (Regency).

Westfield also made changes to the learning environment to give the pupils greater access to space and resources. "I have used different art materials including clay. Not only in art but also in history to make artefacts". Emma, Educator. Westfield have also linked with other schools, local artists and community on art that is on public display to celebrate the community.

The project gave me more confidence with teaching art. I like the pupils to take the lead in art by choosing materials that they would like to use and how to use them. I also ask the pupils to reflect more on their art and art lessons to improve future learning."

Emma, educator (Westfield).

Thinking Differently also provided the opportunity to 'pause and reflect', to trust the process as it evolves, learning to let children take the lead. Steve Wilson, former Education and Engagement Manager encapsulated this perfectly when he reflected:



"Thinking Differently thus has become an even more apt name of the project. It's been a bumpy ride for sure with lockdowns really tearing a hole in the learning, but we have stuck with it. It's also been interesting to see how the artists have reacted to it as well. They are so used to the short-term approach to working in schools that it took a while to relax and follow the scent of pupil's interest and then work with that. It's like retraining yourself to do something from scratch once again and it's to their credit that all in the project have done that".

Steve Wilson, Meadow Arts.

For Arts Organisations

This project has prompted Meadow Arts to review its provision for artists' professional development and schools in the region. The learning from this project may inform future CPD for artists and educators wishing to work in schools and with children with SEND. Meadow Arts have developed a deeper relationship with the project funder, Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) who have shown great understanding and flexibility in terms of extending the project timeframe and providing emergency Covid Support funding to deal with unexpected changes. Meadow Arts have also improved their understanding of evaluating long-term projects and supporting artists / teachers to fulfil this role. This deeper learning is in part attributable to the PHF Evaluation Mentor, and to the project partners House of Imagination and University of Worcester School of Education who brought so much insight and informed observations to the project. Meadow Arts will capitalise on these positive outcomes in new programmes planned for 2023 and beyond.

For HEIs

The project has perfectly illustrated the benefit of arts / cultural and academic partnerships, where each partner provides professional knowledge exchange and benefits from the experience of the other. This acts to amplify the mutual benefits of working together. There is great scope in this regard for Meadow Arts and UoW to work more closely going forwards and conversations are already underway to build on this work and develop a 'memorandum of understanding' for future projects.

"The key thing is it's not an academic exercise. It's about the real lived experience of the teachers, the artists and the pupils; the day-to-day challenges that they're facing and how they're overcoming those challenges." Simon Taylor, University of

Worcester

Conclusions

Whilst researchers can only 'offer considerations to be shared and discussed, reflected upon and debated' (Eisner, 1998, p.205), Thinking Differently has certainly contributed to developing arts-based practice in schools and its stated aim of exploring and testing the potential link between how contemporary visual artists express ideas and the way children with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) uniquely approach the world. This approach is also at the heart of the creative methodology of House of Imagination. The Thinking Differently project has produced clear evidence of how well-structured, long-term, in-school arts projects, led by specialist artist practitioners, can support children with SEND attain improved school results, communicate better and show improved self-confidence.

Dissemination of the project's impact and findings will be through a short film commissioned by Meadow Arts, online blogs, publications, an 'Arts for Health' seminar at The University of Worcester in 2022 and various school websites /learning resources, and via partners in existing cultural educational partnerships in the region.

The project has also arguably produced long term impacts and changes, encouraging project partners to 'think differently' about partnership working itself. For cultural organisations, HEIs and schools, Thinking Differently provides a model of best practice that has encouraged mutually beneficial partnerships and the possibility of long-term collaboration leading to permanent and positive change.

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Recommendations

For Pedagogy

- Find ways of unlocking each child's potential, revealing their interests and innate curiosity
- See teachers and artists as 'enablers' alongside the child as companions in learning
- Embedding creative-reflective practice (reflection 'in action' and 'on action', Schön, 1983)

Recognise the power of the arts, which can transform learning through:

- Creative relationships: building trust through collaboration
- Creative co-enquiry: working alongside children to support their enquiries through creative processes and using intelligent materials; seeing children and young people as coprotagonists in their own learning
- Creative learning environments: cocreated spaces for immersive creative enquiry

For Schools

- Develop creativity to provide new approaches to teaching and learning
- Teaching creatively and teaching for creativity
- Encouraging teachers to be bolder, broadening their creative horizons

For Artists

- Consider the benefits of slowing down and allowing things to evolve
- Use your freedom to invite transgressive activities and creative provocations
- Working in a team, you can be a catalyst for change, providing support and inspiration

For Arts Organisations

- See yourselves as real advocates for the value of creativity in education
- Make the case to funders. Refer to Arts Council England's new 10 Year Cultural Strategy (2020-2030): Let's Create [4]

"...over the next 10 years, we will focus a large part of our development role on ensuring that children and young people are able to fulfil their creative potential and access the highest-quality cultural experiences where they live, where they go to school and where they spend their free time. Our partnership with the Department for Education will remain central to our work in this area. We will continue to advocate - to the Department for Education, and to the public and teachers - for the value of creativity in education as well as the importance of a rich curriculum that includes art and design, dance, drama, and music. Securing the creative and cultural lives of all our children and young people is critical to realising this Strategy's vision for 2030". (ACE, 2020, p.4)

For Higher Education Institutes (HEIs)

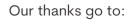
- Acknowledge the importance of knowledge exchange and the sharing of creative expertise
- Consider the ways in which your institution can develop and make a long-term commitment to new partnerships with local arts and cultural organisations.
- Through a joint 'memorandum of understanding' these partnerships can be nurtured over time
- This project is a reminder of the civic role of the University - consider how the academy can become better embedded within its local communities.

"Once children are helped to perceive themselves as authors or inventors, once they are helped to discover the pleasure of inquiry, their motivation and interest explode ..."

Loris Malaguzzi in Edwards et al. (1998)

[4] Within this strategy, Arts Council England have highlighted three outcomes and four main 'investment principles'. Thinking Differently and projects like it could be seen to be contributing to the first of these outcomes; 'Creative Communities' and the investment principle of 'Inclusivity and Relevance' with its focus on access to high quality creative learning experiences for children and young people, including those who are neuro-diverse or who may have special educational needs and disabilities.

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Appendices

Below is the raw data received from each school, set out as they presented it to us. Westfield and Regency Schools chose to tabulate the data, whereas Chadsgrove provided more descriptive evidence.

Appendix 1: Artists' & Teachers' Reflections

School: Regency High School

Teacher/TA: Lynne Brown. Venue/Class: 9LB

Artist: Mark Riley

Project themes	Notes
Raised Attainment What differences have you observed in the children's attainment and abilities as a result of the project?in art?across all subjects?	In terms of Art all children made good or outstanding progress. This isn't necessarily reflected in other subject areas (See data) They all learnt new skills and experienced new techniques and processes.
Improved Communication Skills How has their communication changed as a result of the project? Can they express themselves more clearly? In what ways?	Some of them have shown improvement in communication eg XX has speech therapy interventions but increasingly could have a conversation about the Masked Singer. I spent more quality time with her so could also understand her more. XX's target was to slow down speech so he is understood - saw how well he communicated with his peers when asked to interview them about their work using iPad
Improved self-confidence What did you notice about individual children and their self-confidence when taking part? How has this changed?	Some of the pupils became more independent as the project progressed and irrespective of amount of adult direction all were more confident in their attitude as they knew that on Friday mornings, they had the opportunity to explore their own creative ideas if they wanted to.

Project themes	Notes
Artist's and Teacher's CPD How will your practice change as a result of this experience? What will you do differently? How has this project affected your confidence and skills?	This is quite difficult for me to give feedback that would be of benefit to your evaluation as I am leaving the profession. It has confirmed my view that as an art specialist we should have an invaluable role to play in children's' education and that the learning climate on Friday mornings where there were 2 art specialists with very different skills, but similar values benefitted them greatly.
Were there any unexpected outcomes from the project?	Underestimation of the ongoing impact of COVID restrictions throughout the project

Evaluation and Thoughts 2 School: Chadsgrove School Teacher: Julia Lloyd-Langston

Artist: Sally Harper

Project focus

Working with the group to see what they enjoy and how we can develop a relationship through materials and techniques. Not imposing my ideas and allowing space for their thought processes and time to develop.

Project outcomes/ positives

We used the art studio space throughout the project, which has been great as it has everything we need to access and plenty of space for us all to work comfortably. The pupils have enjoyed being able to be messy and often we work within a group rather than individually. As we continue to work in the space, the group have become much more confident, and it is great to see how new or different friendships have formed. There has been real progress in their communication with each other and with us as the adults in the room. We have seen more signing, use of symbols, VOCA machines and vocalising. Through

this multi communication approach, everyone is included, and everyone has a voice.

To work alongside Julia has been incredibly important to the success of the project. She is the key to understanding and interpreting what the group really want to do. We plan, do, and review every week and discuss what we have observed and what the group have achieved. It has been a success from start to finish as we observe and bring to the project different ways of working and thinking.

From my point of view, working alongside Sally has been an amazing experience. We bounced thoughts and ideas off each other and she gave me the confidence to be much freer with my approach to art teaching as a whole. She taught me to trust the pupils and go with their creative directions. We as facilitators; the pupils as the creators. Sally's confident, calm, brave approach has also helped the teaching assistants to trust in the pupil's creative direction. As we have been allowed a whole morning time slot, we have all been able to take time and step back occasionally to watch the work grow and take shape.

Sketchbooks have been an incredibly positive part of the project; pupils are very proud of their books and really feel a sense of ownership with them as they created them from scratch; the group have been able to add their ideas and thoughts each week. Along with the review of the photos with the group, they also have some of these photos to add to their sketchbooks along with any work such as prints, drawings and paintings that they can also add.

At the beginning of each session, we reviewed photos of the previous session and looked at what we had achieved, this is where we discussed what else we could do throughout the sessions. When we reviewed the suggestions, we were able to assess what the group really wanted to do and through verbal and signed or symbol-based communication the responses ranged from drawing, painting, sculpture, making, messy, design, create and build.

This has been an incredibly positive project to work on and be part of, being able to work alongside another teacher this closely is very rare but has been beneficial for everyone involved as we share our different teaching styles and

methodology. The group have responded so well to being out of their comfort zones, especially when faced with an ever-changing space. It has been so rewarding to see how each and every one of the pupils involved has grown and developed over the span of the project.

Project accomplishments

3D paper modelling, drawing, painting, collage, printing, wire sculpture, felt making, using recycled materials, woodwork, and group collaborations.

Project challenges

Lockdown / Covid has had a great impact on the project, as we could not start until September 2021. Self-isolation has been imposed throughout this time as well, so the project at times, felt a little bitty but something completely out of our control. We tried working with the group over Zoom to keep the continuity but that was very difficult. The main problem was the background noise as the pupils were so excited to share and talk about their work.

There were also challenges, due to routines, daily stands, and health checks

that some of the group often had to leave the session or would not join the session until later, which is always a shame when time is missed but circumstances meant it could not be helped.

Evaluation and Thoughts 3 School: Westfield School Teacher: Emma Norman Artist: Sally Harper (Edited by Simon Taylor)

Approach

Working with the group to see what they enjoyed and responded to, how we could develop a relationship through materials and techniques. Not imposing my ideas and allowing space for their thought processes and time to develop.

Alternative spaces and group work

The use of the hall space worked very well for large scale and messy work. The students responded well to this space, the amount of space they could occupy, being able to work with others that they may not work with in the classroom. They have enjoyed being messy and working within a group rather than individually. As

we continued to work in the space the group became much chattier, and it is great to see how different friendships formed. The group started to ask more questions and to feel braver about asking for what they wanted to do, it became apparent that there were certain techniques that each of the group favoured. By offering lots of different ways to approach a technique that were able to make these choices more easily.

New and different experiences

It was my challenge to offer different experiences and to incorporate what they wanted to do but in different ways. Hence, we worked on paper initially, then large sheets of paper on the floor with large rollers and paint trays. We painted dyes onto large pieces of fabric and drew designs with paint pens as well as designing and painting t-shirts. Some of the group loved getting messy whereas others did not so we were able to experiment and develop new processes with everyone in mind. It was also good that some were able to be pushed a little outside their comfort zones to enable them to try new experiences that they would not get the chance to do within classroom time.

Behaviour Management

No behaviour issues have presented themselves; this has been incredibly positive when talking with TAs as some of the group have issues and need a behaviour management plan. Is this because:

- The group had space to develop their own ideas?
- They just had space being outside the classroom?
- The way in which we worked enabled them to have more autonomy and were able to express themselves much more easily?

Use of Sketchbooks

These have been an incredibly positive part of the project; the group have been able to add their ideas and thoughts each week. Along with the review of the photos with the group, they also have some of their photos to add to their sketchbooks along with any work such as prints, drawings and paintings that they can also add. The sketchbooks almost became a focus as the group asked every week if they could take them home, I did explain that we needed to

keep them in school so we could continue to work in them. There was a real attachment and a sense of pride as they had made the books themselves, they wanted to add to them every week. This also became a way of allowing the group time to reflect and discuss what they had been doing as they were what we used if any of the group finished early, they could pick up their sketchbooks and draw, write or add collage. They were their books and they decided what they wanted to put into them.

Process of Review

At the beginning of each session, we reviewed photos of the previous session and looked at what we had achieved, this is where we discussed what else we could do throughout the sessions. When we reviewed ideas and thought processes the suggestions for what we could do next were to be able to move, to do something messy, make something to take home, painting and junk modelling were what the group always asked for.

Sensory experiences

The variety of media and techniques explored was significant and wide-

ranging, including 3D paper modelling, making installations out of wool, drawing, painting, collagraph collage, printing, dip dyeing, wire sculpture, t- shirt painting, mosaic, light, and shadow puppets. Ideas were developed alongside the group as they talked about what they enjoyed doing.

The felt making process enables all the group to be involved as it's a good sensory experience – using the wool, the bubbly water and rolling. The group really enjoyed the session and there was much discussion about what they had created. The colour mixes reminded them of different things as they worked through the process.

"It sounds like popcorn" said one pupil as he rolled the felt in the blind – it was crunching as he rolled.

He showed me a mix of red and green wool – "It reminds me of a strawberry" I told him.

Another pupil selected certain colours "It's like Autumn" she explained.
We created a small sample today and will continue to develop this over the next sessions and hopefully work together to

create a larger piece together.

Next session: we will return to the collagraph collages that we created last week, and we will print these. Invitations have been made by the pupils and sent to various teachers to invite them to join us. XX is still a little concerned that he will be told off for painting on the tables.

Project challenges

The young people did not recall what we had worked on during the previous week, we did use photographs to recap what we had done the previous week before each session started and this helped them to remember what we had done. They really enjoyed seeing themselves in the photos and it enabled various conversations about what we had been doing. Sometimes this also prompted stories from home and any activities that they had done previously. Because of this it has been challenging to continue with ideas and thoughts as there has been no direct interest / fascination in any particular area apart from painting and junk modelling. I have noted everything they have enjoyed and responded by offering materials and techniques appropriately.

The room was incredibly challenging initially as the space was small and the desks were for individual use unless pushed together and then there still wasn't much room for practical working. We moved the room around on several occasions to allow for work to take place on the floor or to create an intimate space for light and shadow work. The group were happy working in this space initially and I didn't want to take them from their classroom until they got to know me a little better. As we moved into the hall, this was a lot more open and initially there was a worry that it would be too big with too many distractions (people coming through the hall, dinner prep etc) but the group adapted well.

We worked with two one-hour sessions throughout the morning which sometimes felt quite strict and tight, often we finished early and there wasn't time to start something else or we went way over and had to continue into the second session with no time for room reset. Planning the sessions, I have had to take this into consideration so that were able to complete each task on time. The group found it much better if the activities were split into two definite sessions, they sometimes lost interest if we continued

to complete something from the first session. This was a learning curve at the beginning and was adapted to create a better working space for everyone involved.

Working alongside TAs has been incredibly positive, but it is a shame that there was not a consistent working pattern with the class teacher, although we did discuss what had happened over a working lunch. I tended to plan from my observations each week and work on those thoughts. To imbed this style of working and to really see a change in students we needed to be working and planning together and watching and documenting what was happening within the sessions.

Overview

The project was a success. The group looked forward to working on it on a Monday morning. They enjoyed the freedom of the sessions and doing activities that they had defined themselves. It felt like a very positive space with the group learning a lot throughout the time. There is scope to work alongside the group again as a follow-on from this consultation project.

Appendix 2: Schools Data Westfield School - Pupil Data at outset, Spring 2021

Pupil Baseline Data (P scales, SOLAR Achievement Reports etc.)

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
EM	 13-year-old girl Severe learning difficulties Bilateral club foot Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning 	English reading and writing 1B Spoken language P7 / P8	Speaking Links together four key words to convey information in one-to-one situation. Group discussion Maintains interest in and participates in a short staff-led group discussion. Listening Follows two unrelated instructions.	No
RM	 12-year-old boy. Significant articulation difficulties. Sensory neuropathy incontinence. Severe literacy difficulties Hypertonia with ataxia and progressive cerebella atrophy. Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 2B Spoken language 2B	Speaking Confidently talks through their ideas. Group discussion Contributes to an adult led discussion without requiring prompting. Listening Responds to peers' ideas adding simple detail	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
AMA	 12-year-old girl Pyrexia Severe global developmental delay Thoracic scoliosis Cleft palate Astigmatism Delayed fine and gross motor skills Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 3 / 2B Spoken language 2A	Speaking Discuss preferences. Group discussion Explores their ideas on a topic with others. Listening Demonstrates acknowledgment of someone else's opinion or information in their relevant answers.	Yes
НА	 14-year-old boy Global developmental delay. Dyspraxia. Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing 1C Spoken language 1B	Speaking Calls attention to self appropriately when they wish to speak Group discussion Say why they agree or disagree with a peers Listening Demonstrates they are listening through gestures.	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
ΤL	 13-year-old boy Chromosomal disorder 21q deletion with associated learning difficulties. Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 2B /1A Spoken language 2C/2B	Speaking Explains simply what they are doing. Group discussion Can offer another way of doing something Listening Corrects peer on verbal answer	Yes to photos but not to be displayed on the internet or for publicity No to videos
MG	 12-year-old boy Autism Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing P8 Spoken language P5/ P7	Speaking Begins to use the term 'me' when referring to themselves Group discussion Takes part in a simple staff-led discussion in which they can express their views. Listening Follows instructions containing 4 key words.	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
GB	 11-year-old girl Hemiplegia and Epilepsy 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing 1C Spoken language 1A /2C	Speaking Responds when asked a question by an adult Group discussion Answers questions from peers in the setting Listening Asks simple questions to again understanding	Yes
AM	 11-year-old boy Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) Small group and whole class 	English reading and writing 1A Spoken language 1C	Speaking Tells an adult about a personal event Group discussion Takes part in a discussion with a partner Listening Asks a question to aid understanding	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
LMW	 13-year-old girl No diagnosis yet provided 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing P8 Spoken language 1C	Speaking Communicate how they feel to a member of staff Group discussion Talks to a teacher in a group Listening Follows a simple instruction	Yes
KMWW	 12-year-old girl Moderate Learning Difficulties Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 1B Spoken language 1C	Speaking Approaches a person they wish to talk to Group discussion Talks to a teacher in a group Listening Follows a simple instruction	Yes

Westfield School - Pupil Data at close July 2021:

Targets achieved in spring term highlighted in blue.

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
EM	 13-year-old girl Severe learning difficulties Bilateral club foot Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) 	English reading and writing 1B Spoken language P7 / P8	Speaking Links together four key words to convey information in one-to-one situation.	No
	 Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning 	,	Group discussion Maintains interest in and participates in a short staff-led group discussion. Communicates with peers cooperatively.	
			Listening Follows two unrelated instructions.	
RM	12-year-old boy.Significant articulation difficulties.	English reading and writing 2B	Speaking Confidently talks through their ideas.	Yes
	 Sensory neuropathy incontinence. Severe literacy difficulties Hypertonia with ataxia and 	Spoken language 2B	Group discussion Contributes to an adult led discussion without requiring prompting.	
	progressive cerebella atrophy. • Small group and whole class learning.		Listening Responds to peers' ideas adding simple detail	

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
AMA	 12-year-old girl Pyrexia Severe global developmental delay Thoracic scoliosis Cleft palate Astigmatism Delayed fine and gross motor skills Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 3 / 2B Spoken language 2A	Speaking Discuss preferences. Group discussion Explores their ideas on a topic with others. Listening Demonstrates acknowledgment of someone else's opinion or information in their relevant answers. Communicates about the main points of talk.	Yes
НА	 14-year-old boy Global developmental delay. Dyspraxia. Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing 1C Spoken language 1B	Speaking Calls attention to self appropriately when they wish to speak. Explains something they have discovered to the class. Group discussion Say why they agree or disagree with a peers Listening Demonstrates they are listening through gestures.	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
JT Joined later in the sessions	 13 year old boy Chromosomal disorder 21q deletion with associated learning difficulties. Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 2B /1A Spoken language 2C/2B	Speaking Explains simply what they are doing. Group discussion Can offer another way of doing something Listening Corrects peer on verbal answer	Yes to photos but not to be displayed on the internet or for publicity. No to videos
MG	 12-year-old boy Autism Uses a visual timetable for each session 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing P8 Spoken language P5/ P7	Speaking Begins to use the term 'me' when referring to themselves Group discussion Takes part in a simple staff-led discussion in which they can express their views. Listening Follows instructions containing 4 key words.	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
GB	 11-year-old girl Hemiplegia and Epilepsy 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing 1C Spoken language 1A /2C	Speaking Responds when asked a question by an adult Group discussion Answers questions from peers in the setting Listening Asks simple questions to again understanding	Yes
AM	 11-year-old boy Autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) Small group and whole class 	English reading and writing 1A Spoken language 1C	Speaking Tells an adult about a personal event Group discussion Takes part in a discussion with a partner Listening Asks a question to aid understanding	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
LMW	 13-year-old girl No diagnosis yet provided 1-1 and small group learning Reads and writes with text and symbols 	English reading and writing P8 Spoken language 1C	Speaking Communicate how they feel to a member of staff. Describes a property of an object. Group discussion Talks to a teacher in a group. Gives an example of what they want to do and why. Listening Follows a simple instruction. Asks for an activity that was mentioned earlier.	Yes
KMWW	 12-year-old girl Moderate Learning Difficulties Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class learning. 	English reading and writing 1B Spoken language 1C	Speaking Approaches a person they wish to talk to. Touches the person they wish to talk to, to gain attention. Group discussion Talks to a teacher in a group. Gives and example of what they want to do and why. Listening Follows a simple instruction. Repeats instruction which includes small detail.	Yes

Info	Learning level	Spoken language targets	Photo/video consents
13-year-old girlProfound receptive and severe expressive language difficulties	English reading and writing P8	Speaking Give their opinion on a suggestion	No
 Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class 	Spoken language 1C	Group discussion Gives an example of what they want to do and why.	
learning.		Listening Asks a question to aid understanding.	
• 12-year-old girl	English reading and writing	Speaking	No
Epilepsy controlled by brain		Mostly stays on topic in a simple conversation	
	P7/ P8	Group discussion	
Uses a visual timetable for each session1-1 and small group learning	17,10	Links four key words to convey information in a group situation	
	 13-year-old girl Profound receptive and severe expressive language difficulties Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class learning. 12-year-old girl Learning difficulties 	 13-year-old girl Profound receptive and severe expressive language difficulties Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class learning. 12-year-old girl Learning difficulties English reading and writing Spoken language 1C English reading and writing English reading and writing P8 English reading and writing P8 	 13-year-old girl Profound receptive and severe expressive language difficulties Uses a visual timetable for her day. Small group and whole class learning. 12-year-old girl Learning difficulties English reading and writing P8 Spoken language 1C Group discussion Gives an example of what they want to do and why. Listening Asks a question to aid understanding. Speaking Mostly stays on topic in a simple conversation

Regency School - Pupil Data at outset Spring 2021:

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
СВ	 13-year-old girl Severe Learning Difficulty Social, Emotional & Mental Health Speech, Language or Communication Need Areas of strength	English P8+21%	Number skills Add and subtract 2 single digit numbers up to 10 Communication To interact socially on 2 occasions weekly with chosen staff and peers	Yes
	Friendly, follows instructions, works well with others Areas of concern SEMH, speech and language, social communication, anxiety.		Emotional To be able to show how she is feeling or has felt during the day using emotions chart	
SB	 14-year-old girl Speech, Language or Communication Need Severe Learning Difficulty Areas of strength Very independent, follows instructions very well, very funny and entertaining Areas of concern Communication skills, functional literacy and numeracy.	English P6+49%	Number skills To be able to group items in 2s and 5s Literacy To be able to speak sentences with 3 key words Social To take part in class zoom calls and ask one prepared question independently	Yes

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
MC	14-year-old boyAutistic Spectrum DisorderModerate Learning Difficulty	English P10+21%	Emotional To accept when people miss parts of a lesson	Yes
	Areas of strength Number skills, very good reader		Communication To ask a question to a person in the class during the day	
	Areas of concern Social skills, reacting to change, understanding emotions		Sensory To try and choose a pudding from a choice on 2 days per week	
RC	 13-year-old girl Speech, Language or Communication Need Medarata Learning Difficulty 	English P11+20%	Numeracy To tell the time on clock/ watch hands quarter to and quarter past	Yes
	 Moderate Learning Difficulty Areas of strength Literacy - very good reader Excellent writing - independent 		Emotional To talk about at least one positive thing that happens daily and record in diary	
	writer.		Social For RC to participate in Zoom	
	Areas of concern Attendance SEMH		conversations or phone calls with others whilst at home	

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents	
ED	 13-year-old girl Physical Disability Speech, Language or Communication Need Moderate Learning Difficulty 	English P10+27%	Independence To be responsible for clearing up after an activity eg lunch (without prompt and in a given time)	Yes	
	• Moderate Learning Diriculty		Communication		
	Areas of strength Good functional literacy, very helpful and friendly		To follow simple instructions independently		
	and monary		Cognition and learning		
	Areas of concern Numeracy working with money, personal independence		To practise fine motor skills in practical activity daily		
LP	14-year-old boy	English	Fine motor	Yes	
	 Speech, Language or Communication Need 	P8+48%	To use a handwriting sheet each day		
	Moderate Learning Difficulty		Literacy		
	Social, Emotional & Mental Health		To follow instructions at the start of each lesson		
	Areas of strength				
	Very good at following instructions and		Communication To work productively in a small group		
	undertaking class jobs, very active & likes physical exercise, very keen to get on with practical things		of 2 or 3		
	Areas of concern				
	Functional literacy and numeracy, needs				
	clear boundaries, can be a challenge in the home environment.				

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
TR	13 year old boyPhysical Disability (Wheelchair user)Moderate Learning Difficulty	English P8+49%	Numeracy Increase confidence using fractions equal values	Yes
	Areas of strength Very good at following instructions, friendly and very popular, very funny and sociable.		Social and Emotional and Mental health Speak slowly in social conversations with his friends and staff 3 times a week	
	Areas of concern Functional literacy & numeracy, positioning for learning, physical health and wellbeing		PD (Physical Disability) To use his Acheeva on days when he has not got physical interventions	
SS	 14 year old girl Social, Emotional and Mental Health Moderate Learning Difficulty 	English P7+12%	Communication Use my quiet inner voice when talking to staff and peers	Yes
	Areas of strength Very sociable, reading with CIP, PE and general physical skills,		Concentration Work independently in all lessons for 5 minutes	
	understanding instructions		Independence To get ready for the bus and leave on	
	Areas of concern Basic numeracy and literacy skills, letter formation		Social Emotional and Mental Health To talk regularly about a range of emotions	

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
BS	 13-year-old boy Other Difficulty/Disability Moderate Learning Difficulty Speech, Language or Communication Need Areas of strength Numeracy - very good general number skills, helpful in class and likes to be independent Areas of concern Functional literacy, managing his emotions 	English P9+40%	Communication To play board games with different members of the class Literacy To learn to spell a range of red tricky words Independence To follow instructions to be ready for the start of the lesson	Yes
BrS	 14-year-old boy Speech, Language or Communication Need Moderate Learning Difficulty Areas of strength Number skills, contributions in class, physically very able - PE, well organised Areas of concern Confidence, ability to regulate his anger, functional literacy & numeracy 	English P8+79%	Number skills To add money accurately up to 10 pounds Literacy To read a book out loud at least twice a week Social Emotional and mental health To talk about my emotions more readily	Yes

Regency School - Pupil Data at close:

Final Summer Data in blue: English and Art

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents	
СВ	 13-year-old girl Severe Learning Difficulty Social, Emotional & Mental Health 	English P8+21%	Number skills To count in 2's 5's and 10's	Yes	
	 Speech, Language or Communication Need 	P8 + 55% Below expected progress	Communication To speak in longer sentences using colourful semantics for cues.		
	Areas of strength Friendly, follows instructions, works well with others	P7 + 39% Expected progress	Emotional To explore her emotions by talking about the emotion cards in 2		
	Areas of concern SEMH, speech and language, social communication, anxiety.		reflection times per week.		
SB	 14-year-old girl Speech, Language or Communication Need Severe Learning Difficulty 	English P6+49% P7 + 3%	Number skills To be able to group items in 2s and 5s and 10's	Yes	
	Areas of strength Very independent, follows instructions very well, very funny and entertaining		Literacy To use at least 3 key words in both spoken and written sentences		
	Areas of concern Communication skills, functional literacy and numeracy.		Social To use her bucket to increase positive interactions with staff and peers		

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
МС	14-year-old boyAutistic Spectrum DisorderModerate Learning Difficulty	English P10+21% P10 + 57%	Emotional To accept when he misses some events	Yes
	Areas of strength Number skills, very good reader	Below expected progress P8 + 40%	Communication To take part in a game with his peers at least twice a week	
	Areas of concern Social skills, reacting to change, understanding emotions	Above expected progress	Money To budget using money	
			Sensory To try and choose a pudding from a choice on 2 days per week	
RC	 13-year-old girl Speech, Language or Communication Need Moderate Learning Difficulty 	English P11+20% P11 + 25%	Numeracy To tell the time on clock/ watch hands quarter to and quarter past	Yes
	Areas of strength		Emotional To talk about at least one positive thing	
	Literacy - very good reader Excellent writing - independent		that happens daily and record in diary	
	writer.		Social To work with staff to support her	
	Areas of concern Attendance SEMH		choices about who she works with and what she chooses during registration and reflection times.	

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
ED	 13-year-old girl Physical Disability Speech, Language or Communication Need Moderate Learning Difficulty 	English P10+27% P11 + 0% Expected progress	Independence To be responsible for clearing up after an activity eg lunch (without prompt and in a given time) Communication	Yes
	Areas of strength Good functional literacy, very helpful and friendly	P7 + 61% Above expected progress	To follow simple instructions independently	
	Areas of concern Numeracy working with money, personal independence		Cognition and learning To practise fine motor skills in practical activity daily	
LP	14-year-old boySpeech, Language or Communication	English n P8+48%	Fine motor To use a handwriting sheet each day	Yes
	 Moderate Learning Difficulty Social, Emotional & Mental Health 		Literacy To follow instructions at the start of each lesson	
	Areas of strength Very good at following instructions and undertaking class jobs, very active & like physical exercise, very keen to get on with practical things	P7 + 50% Above expected progress s	Communication To work productively in a small group of 2 or 3	
	Areas of concern Functional literacy and numeracy, needs clear boundaries, can be a challenge in the home environment.			

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
TR	13 year old boyPhysical Disability (Wheelchair user)Moderate Learning Difficulty	English P8+49% P9 + 0%	Numeracy Increase confidence using fractions equal values	Yes
	Areas of strength Very good at following instructions,	Expected progress	Social and Emotional and Mental health	
	friendly and very popular, very funny and sociable.	P7 + 39% Expected progress	Speak slowly in social conversations with his friends and staff 3 times a week	
	Areas of concern Functional literacy & numeracy, positioning for learning, physical health and wellbeing		PD (Physical Disability) To use his Acheeva on days when he has not got physical interventions	
SS	14 year old girlSocial, Emotional and Mental Health	English P7+12%	Communication Use my quiet inner voice when talking to staff and peers	Yes
	Moderate Learning Difficulty Areas of strength		Concentration Work independently in all lessons for 5	
	Very sociable, reading with CIP, PE and general physical skills,		minutes	
	understanding instructions		Independence To get ready for the bus and leave on	
	Areas of concern Basic numeracy and literacy skills,		time	
	letter formation		Social Emotional and Mental Health To talk regularly about a range of emotions	

Pupil	Info	Learning level	Targets (half termly linked to EHCP targets)	Photo/video consents
BS	 13-year-old boy Other Difficulty/Disability Moderate Learning Difficulty Speech, Language or Communication Need Areas of strength Numeracy - very good general number skills, helpful in class and likes to be independent Areas of concern 	English P9+40% P9 + 71% Below expected progress P8 + 67% Above expected progress	Communication To play board games with different members of the class Literacy To learn to spell a range of red tricky words Independence To follow instructions to be ready for the start of the lesson	Yes
BrS	 Functional literacy, managing his emotions 14-year-old boy Speech, Language or Communication Need Moderate Learning Difficulty 	English P8+79% Moved class	Number skills To add money accurately up to 10 pounds Literacy	Yes
	Areas of strength Number skills, contributions in class, physically very able - PE, well organised		To read a book out loud at least twice a week Social Emotional and mental health To talk about my emotions more readily	
	Areas of concern Confidence, ability to regulate his anger, functional literacy & numeracy			

Chadsgrove School - Pupil Data: 2020-21 and 2021-22

Pupil	Baseline	Autumn term 20 21	Spring term 20 21	Summer term 20 21	Autumn term 21 22	Spring term 21 22	Summer term 21 22
1	P7	P7+33%	P7+33%	P7+33%	P7+58%	P7+58%	P7+58%
2	P5	P6+58%	P6+58%	P6+67%	P7+0%	P7+0%	P7+0%
3	P5	P7+8%	P7+33%	P7+17%	P7+58%	P7+25%	P7+25%
4	P5	P7+8%	P7+8%	P7+17%	P7+33%	P7+50%	P7+50%
5	P5	P6+58%	P6+58%	P6+58%	P6+58%	P6+58%	P6+58%
6	P5	P5+17%	P5+17%	P5+17%	P5+17%	P7+25%	P7+25%
7	P4	P5+17%	P5+17%	P5+50%	P5+75%	P5+75%	P5+75%
8	P4	P5+0%	P5+8%	P5+25%	P5+50%	P5+50%	P5+50%
9	P7	NL+0%	NL+0%	NL+0%	P7+25%	P7+25%	P7+25%