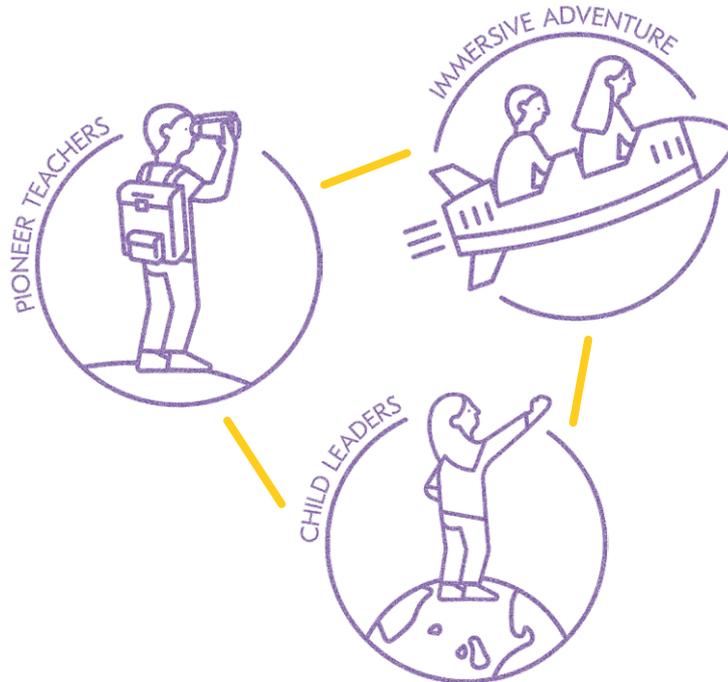
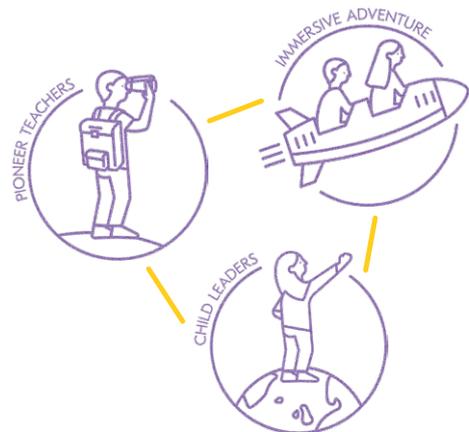


Unique approaches to School Development Priorities



Working collaboratively with networks of primary schools across London, the My Creative School Programme was designed to investigate how we can effectively embed the arts as drivers of powerful learning experiences.

Delivered in partnership with creative practitioners and teachers, the exploratory process aimed to unlock potential for teachers' practice, pupils and the wider school community. Each school developed a Creative Catalyst project, involving arts-led experiments linked to key challenges in its School Development Plan (SDP).



Our programme principles:

- SDP driven
- Arts-led
- Valuing project impacts and teachers' learning in equal measure
- Forming new local networks
- Establishing communities of practice between teachers and artists

This set of cards shares the findings and celebrates the achievements from the Creative Catalyst Projects developed by nine schools from the second year of the programme. The cards summarise what schools did, what they learned along the way, and how you can do the same. Together these cards outline 3 main approaches across the projects, characterising the My Creative School Programme overall:

Pioneer teachers:

teachers empowered
to pioneer new ideas

Immersive adventure:

experiential learning

Child leaders:

child-led exploration

These projects will contribute to a learning resource to support schools from across London and beyond. To find out more about the programme and follow the progress of the learning resource, visit anewdirection.org.uk/mycreativeschool

Trust their experience

How can boosting the imagination
help improve writing skills?



Project Partners

Andrea Puerta

Creative practitioner

Suzanna Welikala

Year 5 class teacher

The pupils of 5M

The big idea

To explore how working from the body and senses can help enrich imagination and connect to greater motivation for writing.

Why

School Development Priority: To raise the profile and engagement of children in writing and continue to improve standards in writing, particularly boys.

What they did

The Year 3 classroom was temporarily transformed into an immersive Mayan rainforest scene, creating a multi-sensory experience to explore. This activated pupils' imaginations for a term-long exploration into Mayan life, using a combination of movement, embodying characters and visualisation of the Mayan experience to inspire new story-building and writing.

What the project partners learnt

- There is a tangible connection between physical experience, imagination and writing. Going on a journey from the body and senses to an experience, igniting children's imagination along the way, will lead to a richer piece of written work for all children.
- A change of scenery, whether simply taking children away from their desks or something more ambitious and immersive, will contribute to improved engagement and can create an impactful hook into a lesson or topic.

Go on an adventure

How can an immersive adventure increase motivation and enthusiasm for writing?



Project Partners

Thor McIntyre-Burnie
Creative practitioner
Louise Fredericks
Year 4 class teacher

Megan O'Mara
Year 5 class teacher
The pupils of Heron and Swan classes

The big idea

To transform the school into a live 'choose your own adventure' experience in which pupils collectively write the narratives, worlds and characters of the story to create an exciting experience for other pupils to discover/explore.

Why

School Development Priority: To raise the engagement of children in writing and reading, and to improve standards in and motivation for writing, particularly for boys.

What they did

During the Spring Term, Years 4 and 5 developed an ambitious school-wide adventure during Spring Term, with twists in plot at every turn. They built their confidence in writing using an immersive multi-dimensional format. The project encouraged collaborative story-writing and mapping; an experiential/physical approach to reading and writing; and the freedom for pupils to take hold of their school environment in new ways through story promenades.

What the project partners learnt

- 'Choose your own adventure' as a reading and writing format excited and engaged the whole class. It links to more familiar video game formats and involves fresh new opportunities to address many challenges to reading and writing.
- Giving children more freedom to explore their own interests and allowing them to build stories and write in different ways, not merely at desks in books, stimulates their engagement and boosts enthusiasm.

Solve a school mystery together

How can a whole-school mystery help boost pupil engagement and build cross-curricular links?



Project Partners

Katharine James
Creative practitioner
Felicity Coyne
Class teacher

**The teaching staff
of Malden Parochial
C of E Primary
School**

The big idea

To invite all staff to co-design an immersive whole-school mystery for pupils to explore and solve.

Why

School Development Priority: To develop cross-curricular links and creativity to provide pupils with a wide range of writing opportunities.

What they did

A whole school, week-long mystery started when three flying machines crashed into the school playground. Teachers co-designed initial components of the mystery and the pupils tried to discover how these machines had ended up in their school. This provided a framework to support detective work and fact-finding that would allow the pupils to travel across different areas of the curriculum directed by their own investigations and interests.

What the project partners learnt

- Teachers co-designing the mystery together created a framework for child-led learning, ensuring support, enthusiasm and clarity of purpose for all. The importance of making time to think creatively about lessons is a learning point to take forward.
- The use of stimulus (scenario, object, image) to grip imaginations as a 'way in' to a project has a huge impact on learning and engagement. It can usefully introduce new lessons or topics, or open up the curriculum to exploration. Through an experiential learning opportunity, children have a greater connection to their own learning through exploring their own interests.

Ignite parents' curiosity

What is the connection between sound and vocabulary?



Project Partners

Lucy Thornton

Creative practitioner

Dan Stringer

Year 4 class teacher

Erika Mint

Year 3 class teacher

The pupils of Willow and Birch classes

The big idea

To re-design the invitation for parents to connect with and support their children's school experience. To experiment with the idea of 'free-range assemblies' in sharing pupils' learning around vocabulary with parents and the rest of the school.

Why

School Development Priority: To boost levels of parental engagement. This school hoped to see a connection between parental engagement and improved attendance. Additionally, this school wanted to improve vocabulary and problem-solving skills.

What they did

Years 3 and 4 spent the Spring Term exploring sounds as a stimulus for greater descriptive words, leading to poetry and a collaborative 'word tree' sculpture. Creating a goal to increase vocabulary provided the hook for parents to engage with the school. Parents were invited to connect with the project in different ways - from donating words, to helping create the sculpture, and participating in informal end of school activities and a 100% pupil-designed 'free-range assembly'.

What the project partners learnt

- The value of spending more time building, exploring and returning to an activity or idea will be reflected in the quality of pupils' work. Child-led ideas have more time to be realised if spread out across the term which in turn increases ownership of learning – evident in an assembly developed entirely by pupils where they explained their learning to parents. Vocabulary has improved through continuous exploration of sound as inspiration.
- Parental engagement can be most successful if we creatively use the times they are usually on site, offering opportunities that mean they can actively participate in something for themselves to understand 'how my child is learning' rather than 'what my child is learning'.

Support them to explore

How can creative challenges
be championed by pupils, teachers
and parents?



Project Partners

Elspeth Penfold

Creative practitioner

Mandy Holland

Art teacher

The big idea

To support a group of children to develop new ways to explore and champion creativity in the school for pupils, school staff and parents.

Why

School Development Priority: To support teaching staff to develop their creative skills and incorporate creative approaches into their teaching practice.

What they did

The school's Student Council utilised creative tools to investigate their school environment in role as 'foragers' of creativity. Inspired by what they discovered, they created a deck of creative challenge cards drawing on the principles of psychogeography and philosophical enquiry, that will be used by the whole school community to develop new ways of teaching and learning within the school. They invited contributions for the challenges from parents and teachers, opening up the dialogue about creativity within the school environment. Teachers are investigating how to use these techniques in their topics or curriculum areas.

What the project partners learnt

We are all learners!

- Applying creative approaches to rediscover the school environment has led to a set of child-led creative challenges for others, which has encouraged a better flow throughout the school and more positive use of shared space. For the Student Council developing challenges for the school has increased their sense of ownership, voice and they have been able to explore their own learning.
- Teachers are able to reflect on their own practice in valuable and meaningful ways in response to ideas from their pupils.

Grow their imaginations

How can pupils grow their own story-writing challenges shaped by their own ideas and interests?



Project Partners

Maria Amidu

Creative practitioner

Katharine Cannon

Year 2 class teacher

Charlotte Weeks

Year 5 class teacher

Pupils of Year 2 and 5 classes

The big idea

To use a gardening analogy to grow words, empowering children to become word gardeners and to connect year groups across the school site.

Why

School Development Priority: To raise the standard of writing within the school and throughout the whole curriculum.

What they did

The teachers and creative practitioner began the Spring Term making time to explore materials and arts-based activities to creatively plan their big idea. This inspired the development of collaborative activities with Years 2 and 5 to explore new ways of growing writing skills across the school. Alternative story-building methods included providing gifts of words and 'seeds' for a story developed by the pupils for active story-telling. Teachers are intending to use this model in class, across the curriculum. Additionally, 'story seeds' will be placed outdoors across sites for children to play when they wish.

What the project partners learnt

- The importance of children having choice, creative freedom and freedom to work outside of the classroom. They found that children have more inspiration and developed greater collaboration when working in different settings, and that vocabulary can be exciting and creative if writing is child-led, informed by pupils' passions and ideas.
- Encouraging a range of opportunities for talking before writing, including sharing words, talking about objects and collaborative story-telling, leads to richer creative stories and a greater enthusiasm for writing. Connection to their own learning through exploring their own interests.

Discover what they value

How can a child-led creative exploration make British Values meaningful?



Project Partners

Simon Batchelor

Creative practitioner

Pauline Newton

Year 3 class teacher

The pupils of St Bridget's class

The big idea

To co-design a whole school interactive game inspired by British Values with Year 3 pupils.

Why

School Development Priority: Improved engagement and understanding of British Values across the school.

What they did

The teacher and creative practitioner began a term-long project by reinterpreting British Values with Year 3 pupils, exploring their passions, interests, skills and the things that were important to them, their school and where they live. A set of 'values that make our community safe' were identified, which became the themes for the Game Of Life. The children developed their own creative challenges for each theme which formed the instructions to play the game. Classes across the school now play the game weekly, embodying the values that pupils feel make a safer community, and collaboratively helping to build a successful school community in the process.

What the project partners learnt

- Taking a child-led approach to shaping an idea is not resource heavy on teachers. By developing their own challenges, children explored cross-curricular learning, developed greater independent learning, language, communication and creative exploration.
- There is great importance in children co-defining common values for themselves and their community, and the ways in which their peers can creatively explore and embody these values. This will lead to greater ownership of pupils' own values.

Make time for wellbeing

How can creative activities for all school staff open up opportunities to discuss personal wellbeing?



Project Partners

Abigail Hunt

Creative practitioner

Alex McIntyre

Creative practitioner

Maggie Delwiche

Class teacher

The big idea

To discover new strategies to support a culture and ecology of wellbeing within the school for adults.

Why

School Development Priorities: Continue to develop the capacity and effectiveness of leadership at all levels. To take steps to improve recruitment and retention of staff at all levels.

What they did

Working with two creative practitioners, the term-long project included one-to-one creative coaching sessions, the development of an evolving creative, reflective space that teachers can contribute to called Space 2, and group reflection moments with teachers and SLT groups. This approach was about opening up opportunities for discussing wellbeing to create a shared language and facilitating agency in individuals to look after their own wellbeing.

What the project partners learnt

- A holistic approach to wellbeing across the school that has involved all staff including SLT, has supported the creation of a shared language around wellbeing. This has led to a greater ownership of personal wellbeing for many.
- Rich alternative, creative approaches can provide solutions to the time and space needed to consider our own wellbeing.

Be a creative pioneer



How can teachers use creative activities to make learning meaningful?

Project Partners

Natasha Cossey

Creative practitioner

Martine

Bruce-Linton

Class teacher

Floriane Anson

Teaching assistant
& Priory Pioneer

Jonathan Wiltshire

Teacher & Priory Pioneer

Kamilla Keegan

Teacher & Priory
Pioneer

Lucyna Koczon

Teacher & Priory
Pioneer

Margaret Stevens

Teaching assistant &
Priory Pioneer

What they did

A small group of teachers and teaching assistants were supported by the lead teacher and creative practitioner to lead the way in exploring arts-led approaches to concepts of time, a key numeracy driver at the school. Projects included 3-Dimensional timelines, film and performance and photography to explore aspects of time. As a bi-product of this exploration, the Pioneers shared some of the outcomes from their time-themed projects at the Tate Exchange as part of a week-long, multi-sensory exhibition.

What the project partners learnt

- The arts provide a key mechanism to explore the curriculum, especially pertinent in cases of special educational needs and disabilities where more visual and experiential methods can bring a subject to life.
- New creative approaches to a core subject has been a valuable learning for teachers. Teachers designed experiential, emotive activities with new materials, which facilitated an assessment of individual targets and contributed to the ongoing development of life skills. They tailored projects to a range of individual needs, learning styles and sensory needs.

The big idea

To support four members of staff to become Creative Pioneers, to lead on experiments in applied numeracy, using the arts to find meaningful ways of connecting students to maths.

Why

School Development Priority: The development of the arts in a severe learning difficulties school community.

Project Partners

Natasha Cossey

Creative practitioner

Martine

Bruce-Linton

Class teacher

Floriane Anson

Teaching assistant
& Priory Pioneer

Jonathan Wiltshire

Teacher & Priory Pioneer

The big idea

To support four member schools, Creative Pioneers, to lead in applied numeracy, using meaningful ways of connecting

Why

School Development Priority of the arts in a severe learning difficulties school community.

My Creative School is a joint initiative between A New Direction and The Education Commission, supported by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in 2016/17 and 2017/18.

A New Direction grows the capacity of all children and young people to shape culture and be creative. We support London schools to deliver and embed high-quality arts and cultural provision across their curriculum and whole school community.

were supported by
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styles and sensory needs.

