

Appendix 5: Case studies of the impact of Shropshire's current CYP offer

Anecdotal examples supplied by consortium members where their work has made a difference to children and young people's lives.

"I'm now in my second year at Oxford, and recently realised that I'm actually more willing to offer my honest opinions - both critical and celebratory - on theatre that I've seen, in comparison to many peers who can sometimes err towards blanket praise. I think this is almost entirely thanks to the standard of shows I saw through Arts Alive. I spent my childhood and adolescence watching such an array of dynamic, engaging, inventive performances - often discussing them with my parents on the drive home afterwards. It absolutely stimulated my love of theatre, and means I now have rather high standards when it comes to what kind of productions I find truly impressive!"

Creative Art After-school club at Harlescott Junior School was set up as a result of observations made in an existing art club at our school.

We identified that SEND pupils' needs were not being fully met due to the sizing of the group and also the level of work. We also noticed how a number of children on our SEND Register were not attending school clubs unless they were personally invited to club - this involves a separate letter been sent homes to individuals. The theory is that if you are personally invited you may feel more inclined to consider joining the club.

Creative Arts group began on Monday 2nd June and is running for six weeks. In September we plan to continue with such a group each term.

We know that art is important for our children; in art lessons we've seen our children deeply involved in art demonstrating careful concentration and absorbing new sensations as they experiment with a range of media. By offering Art Club and Creative Arts group to our pupils we are providing further opportunities for children to gain useful life skills. We encourage them to be as creative as possible and have been fortunate enough to gain the support and resources of Scrappies, from Church Stretton.

One pupil, who attends this group, an eleven year old female (PUPIL C) has benefitted greatly from this experience. It has become a highlight of her week. She now looks forward to coming along to club. She is socialising with new friends across the school and is able to develop her creative skills and challenge her imagination too.

Pupil C has been able to socialise with other children from our school through this group. She has engaged in friendly conversation with both children and adults. She particularly enjoyed the mask work we did. She responded well when choosing materials and was quite choosy. She knew exactly what she wanted. She demonstrated good listening skills too. She presented her final work in a

school assembly (of 320 pupils), something which is a bit of an ordeal for her. She has enjoyed searching the crafts collections for just the right material for her design. She liked to comment on the texture of the materials.

Pupil C was very good at testing possibilities. She spent time thinking about exactly which material would be best for her mermaid. She could not be persuaded to change to something new once her mind was made up. She could give good reasons for the suitability of her choices. Comments like "I don't want to use the wool for the mermaids hair, that will not curl. Ribbon does curl". "Should I use a shorter piece of blue silk for the mermaids body?" Pupil C was regularly engaged in the discovery of "how" and "why." Creative Arts group allowed Pupil C to try new ideas, to experiment, to solve problems.

Creative Arts allowed our pupils to see they have control over their efforts. Through the art sessions, they also practiced sharing and taking turns, as well as appreciating one another's efforts. At the end of each session the leader of the group celebrated the children's successes. The leader celebrated individual uniqueness as well as success and accomplishment, all part of our aim to build self-confidence. Seeing Pupil C beam with pride at the end of a session was just lovely to see.

Cutting, sticking, peeling, painting provided opportunities for Pupil C to improve her fine-motor skills. It sometimes caused frustration but it was worth it.

Creative Art club has developed Pupil C's child's creativity. Rather than being told what to do, answers and directions have come from her. Art is an experience that requires freethinking, experimentation, and analysis. This club has provided a positive experience for Pupil C and all of the other children in this club. We shall definitely provide this club in the next academic year.

Summer Reading Challenge

Each year Shropshire Libraries join in with the national Summer Reading Challenge for young people, organised by The Reading Agency.

What is the challenge?

Children aged 4 to 12 are challenged to read six books over the summer holidays, and in return they receive rewards and stickers and, those who complete the challenge receive a certificate and a medal. Younger children are not left out as they have the chance to join the Bookstart Bear Club, a year-round scheme available to all 0 to 4 year olds. Both schemes are completely free and really easy to join.

Not only does the challenge offer rewards, incentives and opportunities to engage with each other at library events, but national research has also shown that it prevents the dip in reading ability that can occur over the summer holidays.

Circus Stars 2011

Between July and September this year over 2000 children throughout Shropshire took part in the Circus Stars Summer Reading Challenge and more than 50% of them read six books. In addition to this over 2000 people took part in more than 60 exciting Circus Stars events and as an added bonus 15 young people were recruited as Circus Star volunteers and between them they contributed more than 140 hours of their time to the project. Once again, the Summer Reading Challenge has proved to be a resounding success in Shropshire.

Here are some of the comments received from children who took part in Circus Stars:

“I thought that Circus Stars was great. I liked the prizes and the books were fab”.

“I feel really proud!”

“I loved Circus Stars because it gave me a challenge over the summer.”

“I didn’t like the theme but I liked doing the challenge.”

“The books I read this year were very different to what I would usually pick but I enjoyed them all.”

and this is what some of the adults who were involved said:

“The library staff and helpers were all dedicated to giving the children a brilliant time, face painting, crafts, children’s entertainer and storytellers, not to mention sweets, biscuits and drinks. I took my granddaughter along for the event and we both loved it”.

What a fabulous day of activities, we really enjoyed it”.

“You always put on great activity days – this is one of the best ever”.

“What a wonderful atmosphere when I entered the library today”.

“Thank you for today, the circus workshop was fantastic, especially the juggling.”

“My son felt extremely proud of his reading and the added incentive helped.”

“An excellent scheme. My daughter loves libraries and selected books she may not have otherwise noticed.”

“This years SRC subject has been one of the best, and we have been joining in for years”.

“It’s great to have the Reading Challenge in the summer holidays. We have fun, enjoy the books and learn new things.”

“An excellent way to show children that reading can be a ‘summer escape’. We always look forward to and are stimulated by the challenge. The graphics this year were particularly excellent. The librarian’s enthusiasm is much appreciated.”

“The challenge was brilliant. We had fun choosing the books as well as talking about the stories. It’s a terrific motivation and a lovely shared experience.”

“It’s a wonderful scheme which has really encouraged both of my children to read for themselves.”

“There is one boy who finds it very difficult to engage with work in class. He can be distracting to others and lacks focus. He was so enthused by what he was doing in the workshop that he ended up being the child who had a go at woodcarving and did a great job. When usually he would be trying to get someone else’s attention in a variety of ways he kept his head down for a long time and concentrated on what he was doing. His handwriting isn’t very neat as he doesn’t always form letters correctly and yet the bird that he carved was delicate and beautiful. Mostly importantly he had learnt a new skill in a short amount of time and had really enjoyed the experience.”

When Lewis first got involved with our programme he was part of the ASDAN programme, an accreditation scheme that is offered by schools to young people with special educational needs, or to those that might not achieve well if following more academic pathways.

Lewis first became involved in our youth filmmaking programme through a First Light funded film production. This provided opportunity for him to work alongside professional filmmakers and animators and to experiment, and develop his own creative style. Lewis quickly demonstrated keen enthusiasm, excellent commitment, and was a great team player. The film he worked on won the 2012 Film Nation Award.

His experience gave him confidence and he then applied to our BFI Film Academy an intensive, industry standard, talent development programme which specialises in animation. This opportunity afforded him (and us) the chance to discover he had a particular aptitude for CGI and for cell animation.

Through participation in the Academy, Lewis’ network of friends (in particular those actively engaged in the arts) grew and he became part of a WM wide network.

The BFI Film Academy then invited us to nominate a participant to be mentored by a BAFTA member and we put forward Lewis.

Lewis continued to respond to further creative filmmaking opportunities and on leaving school chose to study media arts at the local FE College.

As an Academy alumni member, we then encouraged Lewis to apply to one of the Academy residential courses (a highly competitive scheme) and earlier this year he was successful and was selected for the Animation Camp in Bristol. He described his time there as “the best experience of my life!”.

Michael, one of our 2013-2014 young writers was working in the late night garage at Craven Arms and hating it when he joined our young writers group. He rightly could recognize he had skill but lacked confidence in his writing. Through the young writers programme he gained confidence in both his abilities and himself. He wrote his play, a ghost story, whilst on shift at the garage which formed part of our young writers festival week, as well as one of the monologue pieces from Stores from the Street. After the young writers festival he quit his job and applied to Universities. He has just been accepted with an unconditional offer to the Central Film School of London on a screenwriting course. We are in awe of this journey and his determination and commitment.