## Case Study

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Establishment name:</th>
<th>St Thomas the Martyr CE Primary School</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>Award granted:</td>
<td>Innovative Practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project title:</td>
<td>‘Developing a Creative Curriculum that Motivates and Enthuses Teachers and Pupils’</td>
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### Project summary

- Led by our newly-appointed headteacher and his vision for taking the school forward, our aim was to develop a broader, balanced and more creative curriculum which enabled the children to make connections between the different aspects of their learning and empowered the teaching staff to take ownership of the curriculum.
- We decided on a more thematic approach as outlined in Excellence and Enjoyment and began with a whole staff curriculum audit to identify priority stand alone subjects and those subjects that could be combined with a more thematic approach. The senior management team developed a framework for the new curriculum. The school then split into key stages and worked together to establish thematic links, supported by two experienced Foundation Stage teachers who had already implemented creative skills-based curricula. The senior management team designed the format of the thematic approach - combined unit plans - CUPs.
- The pace of teaching and learning has increased because the timetable and daily schedule has changed to accommodate CUPs. Children are enthusiastic and engaged in their learning by relating to the linked areas of the curriculum. Teachers developed greater self confidence to meet the needs of the children through the greater flexibility offered by CUPs. An improved learner-friendly environment is evident around the school as children’s work is displayed demonstrating the improvement in standards of work produced.
- The project continues to develop.

### Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

To develop a curriculum that meets the needs of our children

### Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- [ ] Be healthy
- [x] Make a positive contribution
- [ ] Stay Safe
- [ ] Enjoy and achieve
- [ ] Achieve economic well-being
What were you hoping to achieve?

- A creative, cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning, resulting in a more relevant curriculum that engages and enthuses the learner.
- Less compartmentalised learning enabling children to apply their skills, knowledge and understanding across all subjects.
- To raise standards by incorporating the children’s learning styles.
- Providing a curriculum that enables staff to have confidence to use their own creativity.
- Inspired staff with an increased willingness to embrace change and challenge.
- To raise parental awareness of their child’s learning so they can support and reinforce at home.
- To improve links with outside agencies in order to enhance learning.

How did you identify the need for this practice?

- Our newly-appointed headteacher evaluated current practice, standards being achieved and the way the curriculum was taught, recognising issues that needed to be addressed - e.g. underachievement in Lower KS2, girls’ poor performance in numeracy, boys in writing.
- Lack of continuity in teaching and learning across Key Stages as identified by Ofsted.
- SATs results were successful but Contextual Value Added score was not as high as it could be.
- Parent/pupil questionnaires identified a need for change.
- A desire to respond to recent documents including Every Child Matters and Excellence and Enjoyment, Assessment for Learning.

What did you do?

**Spring Term 2007**

- Whole staff curriculum audit. Staff meetings held and we identified the principles for a creative curriculum and discussed how we were going to implement our project. SMT developed framework for new curriculum.
- Split into Key Stages, each supported by Foundation Stage teachers with skills in developing creativity across the curriculum. Identified thematic links between areas. SMT designed format of CUPs.
- Subject co-ordinators reviewed plans to ensure coverage and progression. DT and Art coordinators devised new units to further reinforce creative links. Audited current provision with subject co-ordinators.
- Identified that current school day timetable was not conducive to new approach. Changed whole school timetable to reduce 'lost time' (break and lunchtimes reorganised) incorporating three morning sessions and one afternoon session where the approach was more creative.

**Summer 2007**

- Recognised that some year groups (4 & 6) were missing out on core science units. Planned to teach them as stand alone units for 2007-8
- Introduced new planning formats
• Identified themed weeks.
• Piloted new timetable
• Informed parents of curriculum change.

**Autumn 2008**

• Implemented combined unit curriculum.
• Identified areas within school to showpiece new curriculum.
• Encouraged staff to take part in more visits and encouraged more visitors into school.
• Implemented new after school clubs (ICT, art and craft, multi-skills)
• Forged links with outside agencies (ICT links with Upholland High School, Food partnership with Holland Hall restaurant).

**Spring 2008**

• Key Stage and Staff meetings monitoring CUPs.
• Recognition that some areas in DT (food) have not been given enough coverage. Co-ordinator addresses situation.
• Support staff on courses for implementing more food technology and after school cookery club.
• Recognition that teachers need more guidance in progressing skills in art.
• Art co-ordinator identifies specific objectives for each year group.
• Audit of resources to incorporate more cross-curricular links with literacy.

**Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?**

• Vision for creative curriculum shared with governors and parents. Parents are regularly informed through curriculum newsletters from each year group on their children's learning and their participation is encouraged.
• Support staff are actively encouraged to contribute to and participate in the new curriculum. They are encouraged to develop professionally through courses.
• Links have been forged with local businesses and high schools to enhance the curriculum.
• As a church school our links are strong and will be further enhanced by the provision of an after school Christian club.

**How has the practice been modified or improved during development?**

• Timetable is piloted, evaluated and modified continuously.
• CUPs refined to ensure greater continuity of skills and learning objectives particularly Art and DT.
• Length of CUPs revised.
• Constantly seeking opportunities to improve the curriculum, particularly with outside agencies to enhance the teaching and learning experiences.
• Looking for more opportunities to incorporate literacy and numeracy.
• Stand alone science units incorporated into the combined units from Sept 08.
• Resources are being re-assessed and money allocated to fully support our project.
What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?

- Pupils talk with enjoyment and enthusiasm about their learning experiences. They are learning for a real purpose. There is an excitement when a new display is show pieced and the children involved are excited and eager to share their learning with the rest of the school.
- Behaviour has improved amongst more challenging classes and individuals.
- Enhanced child friendly learning environment.
- Verbal parental feedback to teachers has been positive.
- School’s tracking system indicates increased progress especially in years 4 and 5. Majority of children moving one or two sub levels in first two terms.
- School Improvement Partner acknowledges marked improvements.
- On recommendation of School Improvement Partner and School Adviser, school has been removed from category of serious educational difficulties. School currently judged to be 'good' by School Improvement Partner.
- Teachers are motivated, offering support and encouragement to their colleagues.

What are the next stages in the development process?

- Incorporate new revised frameworks into CUPs.
- Measure the impact of our new creative approach on pupils’ attainment at the end of KS2.
- Establish learning teams to monitor standards in individual subject areas.
- Make further links with outside agencies to encourage and inspire creative approaches.

What aspects of this practice may be useful for other establishments to consider?

- You can be more creative and flexible in what you teach.
- Put the fun back into learning.