## Case Study

**Establishment name:** Royal Cross Primary School  
**Lancashire no.:** 00/134  
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**Award granted:** Good Practice  
**Project title:** Raising standards of achievement through a creative curriculum.

### Project summary

Pupils at Royal Cross have difficulties acquiring language due to the nature of their SEN. We have developed a thematic approach to curriculum content and delivery in order to provide more enjoyable and effective opportunities for language enrichment. Evidence of the impact on learning convinced staff that creative experiences are a better way of developing pupil's communication skills and confidence. Traditional approaches to literacy work often fail to engage our children because it is difficult for them to succeed whereas motivation is increased by visual and practical activities.

We obtained funding from Creative Partnerships to explore the potential of a more creative approach in raising pupil attainment through an 'Enquiry School' project. We worked with a creative agent during the first half of the spring term who put us in touch with 3 external creative practitioners - a poet, a dance teacher and a puppet maker. They began by involving staff in workshops during an INSET day which also included joint planning time, then 15 workshops were delivered to the children during the following 6 weeks.

The project ended with a Celebration Day for families and an Evaluation Day when the creative agent interviewed staff for feedback regarding positive outcomes and impact on learning. The project was a great success and is continuing to develop through further work as a 'Change School'.

### Specific aspect of practice to be accredited?

Development of a creative curriculum to raise standards of achievement in language development.

### Aspect of Every Child Matters addressed:

- [x] Be healthy
- [ ] Stay Safe
- [x] Enjoy and achieve
- [x] Make a positive contribution
- [ ] Achieve economic well-being
**What were you hoping to achieve?**
We wanted all the pupils to be engaged and to enjoy learning through creative experiences. We particularly wanted to raise attainment in terms of communication skills and confidence.

**How did you identify the need for this practice?**
We trialled thematic approaches to curriculum planning and delivery following attendance at Creative Curriculum workshops run by Lancashire. Teachers were keen to develop more creative teaching and learning because they felt that the children responded well to visiting artists and workshops. We noticed that children were more motivated to communicate during practical activities.

**Briefly describe the main characteristics of the school?**
Not supplied

**What did you do?**
We included the development of a more creative curriculum within the school development plan and agreed a school improvement action plan.

We applied for funding from Creative Partnerships for a 12 month project as an 'Enquiry School' investigating the potential of a creative curriculum.

We successfully obtained a grant and were allocated a Creative Agent to work with the school during the project and planned and delivered a theme incorporating external creative practitioners.

In Autumn 2009 we were successful in obtaining continued involvement from Creative Partnerships (now called 'Curious Minds') to further develop as a 'Change School'.

**Which members of the establishment and/or wider community have been involved and what was their role?**
The Deputy Head was the creative curriculum coordinator and has successfully involved all the teachers in developing a thematic approach. She liaised with the creative agent in identifying appropriate external creative practitioners and in the planning and evaluation of the project.

The teaching staff took part in jointly planning the theme of 'Change' for the half term and was interviewed on the Evaluation Day to provide feedback to the Creative Agent.

The 3 artists who worked with the school delivered INSET training to the staff and 15 workshops to the children on poetry, dance and puppet making.

Parents and families attended the Celebration Day to showcase the outcomes for pupils.
**How has the progress of the project been monitored and evaluated?**

Not supplied

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

There is improved planning with relevant inclusion of workshops and teachers are more confident about evaluating the positive impact of activities. Staff motivation and the ability to measure learning outcomes are important for continuing development of this approach in the future.

**What has been the impact of the project on pupils’ learning, achievement or enjoyment and how has this been measured?**

Pupil participation in activities improved and their language and communication skills were enhanced. The dance and puppet making sessions were a good opportunity for imaginative work and the chance to perform for parents. The school was full of puppets and wall displays showing what pupils had learned during the theme. The teaching staff provided feedback to the creative agent and the deputy head produced a summary report. Pupils learning and achievement was clearly enjoyable. Our Ofsted Inspection highlighted the fact that 'the curriculum and the ways it is enriched are outstanding' and 'every aspect focuses very strongly on promoting communication' so that pupils can achieve well.

**What are the next stages in the development process?**

We want to continue developing the creative curriculum to ensure that planning demonstrates curriculum coverage and the impact on pupils learning outcomes is clearly recorded. We also want to embed a thematic approach so that it can be sustained after the Creative Partnership project comes to an end.

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

Staff need to be motivated and feel confident about working in this way so that it can be sustained, as it is expensive to use lots of artists and workshops. Also planning and assessment needs to be carefully monitored to ensure coverage of subject areas and impact on learning. Creative approaches can enable pupils with complex needs to communicate with each other and get involved in activities which are practically based.

**Any other comments:**

We love this way of working at Royal Cross. Taking a whole school approach provides lots of opportunities for reinforcement through wall displays, 'Show and tell' assemblies and celebration open days. The teachers are enthusiastic about planning and delivery so that teaching and learning are more enjoyable for everyone!