

PRESS RELEASE

Pupils Step into the Space Age to Explore New BSF School in Leicester

Pupils in Leicester are stepping into the space age this autumn as they mix drama and science to explore their new school. Pupils from Beaumont Leys School have been working with local charity The Mighty Creatives and acclaimed theatre company Stan's Cafe through the Creative Partnerships programme to build 'Space Steps', an interactive trail around the school which allows audience members to interact with the building. Creative Partnerships (www.creative-partnerships.com) is the Government's flagship creative learning programme.

Elizabeth Crosby, an assistant head-teacher at the school who has been coordinating the project, said, "Our brand new school was opened in April and is a specialist science college. Having been to see Stan's Cafe's 'Spy Steps' at Warwick Arts Centre, our young people had a brainstorming session and came up with the idea of imagining their new school as a space ship and the 'Space Steps' project was born. They've spent several weeks with Stan's Cafe planning the story and have enthusiastically been stickering 'steps' around the whole school over half-term. Most of the children and teachers had no idea what we've been working on so we were excited to see their reaction when they came in to find their school transformed."

The 'Space Steps' project draws together learning from a variety of subject areas. The school lockers have been transformed into a science lab, with the Periodic Table stickered on their doors and there was an art project to draw the baby aliens who are incubating there. Environmental concerns have also been considered - the imaginary space ship runs on an innovative fuel system, which extracts CO₂ from the atmosphere, uses the oxygen to run the craft and turns the waste carbon into diamonds!

James Yarker, Stan's Cafe's Artistic Director, explained, "The enthusiasm and imagination both staff and students have brought to Space Steps has made the project a pleasure to work on. The building is already halfway to being a spaceship. A lot of the technology is 'space age' and with the pupils and staff working together they're clearly ready for lift-off."

The installation at Beaumont Leys School is the latest of a series of site-specific theatre pieces devised by Stan's Cafe aimed at encouraging people to explore a building or area. Inspired by teach-yourself-to-dance floor mats, the Steps Series invites audiences to perform the show themselves. Performance instructions are printed out as vinyl footsteps,

handprints, 'objectprints' and script fragments which are stuck to venue walls, doors, floors and ceilings.

Previous Steps Series pieces have taken place in a variety of venues in Edinburgh, Birmingham, Coventry and Croydon but this is the first time one has been staged in a school.

Pupils and teachers are exploring 'Space Steps' throughout the term and the installation will be open to the public on selected Saturdays from 21st November, contact Beaumont Leys School on 0116 2344480 for dates and times.

NOTES TO EDITORS

For more information or to arrange an interview or photo call please contact:

Sarah Scott, PR & Media Manager at Creativity, Culture and Education on 020 7420 5423 or email: sarah.scott@cceengland.org

Alternatively contact:

Siân Lambert, Knowledge & Communications Manager at The Mighty Creatives on 0116 2533470 or 07540668251 or email sian@themightycreatives.com.

Creative Partnerships (www.creative-partnerships.com):

Creative Partnerships is the Government's creative learning programme which has worked with over 940,000 young people and over 90,000 teachers by fostering long-term partnerships between schools and creative professionals to inspire, harness the potential of creative learning and experiment with new ideas. Managed by new national organisation, Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) (www.creativitycultureeducation.org), the programme was launched in 2002 and has worked with nearly 5,000 schools across England, from Key Stage 1 to 4.

Creativity, Culture and Education (www.creativitycultureeducation.org):

Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) is the new national organisation which aims to transform the lives of children and families by harnessing the potential of creative learning and cultural opportunity to enhance their aspirations, achievements and skills. **Our vision** is for children's creativity to be encouraged and nurtured in and out of school and for all children to experience and access the diverse range of cultural activity in England because these opportunities can have an enormous impact on their life chances.

CCE delivers the following cultural and creative programmes and initiatives:

- *Creative Partnerships* – the Government's flagship creative learning programme: www.creative-partnerships.com
- *Find Your Talent* – the Government's pilot cultural offer for all children and young people: www.findyourtalent.org
- *Shine* – the annual celebration of the talent of all children and young people: www.shineweek.co.uk

The Mighty Creatives (www.themightycreatives.com):

Creative Partnerships in Leicester is delivered by The Mighty Creatives. It is a new charity (launched in April 2009) which works to provide young people from across the East Midlands with creative and cultural opportunities. The Mighty Creatives is based in Leicester, Derby and Nottinghamshire and is unique in being run with and for young people.