Creativity, School Ethos and the Creative Partnerships programme

Sara Bragg
Helen Manchester
The Open University

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Creative Partnerships and School Ethos Final Report

Section A: Executive summary

This report was commissioned by the national organisation Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) which runs the 'flagship creative learning programme', Creative Partnerships.

Creative Partnerships was established in 2002 and aims to foster long-term partnerships between schools and creative professionals to 'inspire, open minds and harness the potential of creative learning' (www.creativepartnerships.com). The programme has worked with just over 1 million children, and over 90,000 teachers in more than 8,000 projects in England.

Creativity, Culture and Education commissioned research to 'evaluate the nature and impact of Creative Partnerships on school ethos'; the project ran between June 2009 and December 2010.

Previous research and anecdotal evidence had repeatedly suggested that an important outcome of Creative Partnerships programmes related to improving relationships between staff and students, enhancing motivation to learn, boosting the reputation of the school in the local community, and so on – all, clearly, issues relevant to ethos. Yet because the schools involved were often located in disadvantaged areas with rapid turnover of students in a transient population, the good work achieved in such respects did not easily translate into increased attainment and risked being undervalued as a result.

A.1   Literature Review

The **literature review** begins by questioning why 'ethos' and associated concepts such as 'climate' or 'culture' have received increased attention in educational thinking over the last two decades. A number of factors help account for this relatively recent prominence:

- **Market-oriented reforms of education** have promoted competition between schools and created a perceived need to generate a distinct identity or ethos to attract 'customers'
- Ethos has been identified as a **contributor to school effectiveness**, and therefore as an expedient (low-cost) solution to improving performance: however, we note that the existence and nature of the link is contested and far from proven.
- Ethos is also used to describe the '(pre)conditions **for learning'**. We should be wary when the term is used only to mean enforced codes of conduct or to underpin offensive representations of students' home cultures as being somehow 'against' learning. However, it has also been used in this sense to sustain more elaborated and progressive positions: for instance, to justify greater creativity in schools' provision, explore the importance of emotional and social aspects of learning, and analyse and improve relationships between members of the school community.
- School ethos '**as learning'** – how it is organized and run - offers important learning experiences for young people about the nature of society and their place and agency in it. This view generally underpins proposals for democratic reforms of schools to promote active citizenship; it is rarely articulated explicitly to justify traditional, authoritarian and hierarchical structures.

Ethos can be mobilized in such varied and sometimes conflicting ways in part because it remains a nebulous concept: an atheoretical and 'empty signifier' that can be filled with meanings to suit different contexts, purposes and speakers.

Our **definition of ethos** stresses the following:

- Ethos unavoidably embodies **values** and a **vision of society** – even in 'describing' a school's ethos an observer or researcher draws on particular interpretive and evaluative frameworks; these may be more or less explicit, but they cannot be neutral or absent.

- Ethos is both **official** and **unofficial** – that is, it cannot be read off from the versions made available by school management, and a range of perspectives on it should be sought, including 'from below';

- Ethos emerges from **everyday** processes of **relationships** and **interactions** and it concerns **norms** rather than exceptions; research benefits from extended immersion in schools to grasp these shared, mundane experiences;

- Ethos is in some respects intangible, to do with the '**feel**' of a school, with that which is experienced but, since it is also **taken for granted**, may **not easily** be **articulated**. Thus accounts given by insiders may need to be supplemented by critical analysis from external observers;

- Ethos also, however, emerges from **material** and **social** aspects of the **environment**; research should take these into account rather than assuming that the intangible nature of ethos makes them irrelevant;

- Ethos is **continually negotiated** by those within the school rather than simply imposed once and for all; members of school communities are active agents in defining and redefining ethos.

A.2   Research Methods

The research **methods** involved **qualitative** studies of five schools exemplifying good or interesting practice, supplemented by the research teams' previous research knowledge. The schools included a nursery, primary, special and two secondary settings.

The research followed the school year and tracked particular Creative Partnerships projects from start to finish. It used standard, creative and visual methods including observation, interviews, shadowing students, focus groups, photography and metaphorical thinking' (see p.28).

It would be an oversimplification to claim that a Creative Partnerships programme had had a definitive impact on a school's ethos. It would inevitably be only one amongst many policy initiatives; the time span of the research was limited, making it difficult to capture change at such a broad level as ethos; and key practitioners in the schools represented the Creative Partnerships programme as an ally or catalyst in their existing commitment to creativity, rather than as transformative.

Instead, we identify the ***additionality*** of the Creative Partnerships programme – how it enhanced practice and helped it develop in ways it might not otherwise have done – and point to particular spaces where its contribution might be most strongly felt.

A.3   Creative School Ethos

We discuss creative school ethos under the headings **considerate**, **convivial** and **capacious** – single words, each with many meanings. They have served us as 'crystallizations', to draw on Laurel Richardson's metaphor for research; that is, as a way to discuss issues from different angles, appreciating that they are multi-dimensional and complex, and that one's perspective is inevitably partial (Richardson, 1998). We hope that they will open conversation, discussion, debate, reflection and dissent with and amongst others about significant aspects of practice.

By the idea of being **'considerate'**, we refer to appropriate kinds of care, discipline and relationships in school, emphasizing the importance of mutual, reciprocal civility, fairness and sensitivity, of safety and intelligibility. Being considerate might feature in definitions of inclusive culture, but it goes beyond 'tolerance' in stressing more strongly the need to respect students' cultures and life experiences (which are often very different – and tougher - than teachers', especially in disadvantaged areas) and in seeing these as a potentially positive contribution to their learning or to a creative process, rather than as something to be ignored or supplanted. Being considerate implies that students matter and feel they matter (but not only to the extent that they submit to the ethos of the school as others have defined it); that they are taken into account and can account for themselves. It also involves reflective practice by staff who consider what they do.

Creative Partnerships supports considerate school ethos through, for example:

- its commitment to youth voice, involving young people in decisions previously seen as beyond them, in different relationships with teachers and other adults;
- improving the material environment of a school, therefore catering for students' diverse physical, emotional, bodily and aesthetic needs and helping students feel 'cared for' and considered;
- additional funding for projects through which students feel valued, appreciated, noticed;
- extending extra-curricular provision to cater for a wide range of interests
- supporting particular student and/or staff groups that are often invisible or overlooked so that they 'matter' and demand consideration, e.g. by controlling important resources, having work publicly displayed, developing expertise that others call on;
- valuing skills beyond the cognitive, in creative projects;
- using artist resources to document and make visible learning processes, for instance through frequently-changing displays, valuing students' work, rather than showy but static exhibits
- encouraging reflective practice and ensuring it is built into projects;
- helping schools in disadvantaged areas to give affirmative accounts of their work – sometimes challenging an unfairly negative public image - that enable students to feel more positive about their association with the school

The **convivial** asserts the importance of fun and enjoyment in learning processes; that teachers and students can enjoy being sociable, and take pleasure in each others' company. We draw on Paul Gilroy's discussion of post-colonial 'convivial cultures', which highlights the role of arts and culture in enabling interaction and 'getting along' in heterogeneous settings. The convivial foregrounds the ethical by stressing interdependence and interrelatedness; we rely on others to develop our own identity and agency because these qualities are social, created in relationships and between individuals. Conviviality therefore requires, for instance reflective ethical accountability for the school's and teacher's role in creating particular situations or behaviours. We take it to involve inter-relationships of knowledge expressed for instance by an integrated curriculum, knowledge connecting to the world, relating to individual past histories and experiences.

Creative Partnerships supports convivial school ethos through, for example:

- offering students and teachers (sometimes rare) enjoyable and sociable experiences in its projects
- legitimizing partnership working, collaboration and mutually supportive relationships between teachers;
- challenging traditional hierarchies and role allocations
- supporting CPD on innovative approaches such as Forest Schools, which stimulate collective endeavour
- projects in which teachers and students both participate as learners and share feelings and ideas
- respecting student cultures and knowledges in creative work
- connecting students with networks beyond the school
- supporting specific whole-school consultation events

The **capacious** allows us to discuss 'space-making' through creative school ethos, which has several dimensions. These include the idea of having range and 'room for manoeuvre' in school and in learning, that is, flexibility and diversity in what kinds of teacher or student one can be, what kinds of teaching are valued, rather than a narrow enforced consensus; the idea of porousness between school and community, self and other; being able to contain more difficult emotions, which are evoked by both learning and creativity, as suggested by psychoanalytically informed perspectives; and attention to space and the aesthetic in school environments, an area where Creative Partnerships has made particular impact. In the sense of increasing the capacity or capability of both teachers and students, the capacious insists on the educational rigour of creative learning.

Creative Partnerships supports capacious school ethos through, for example:

- projects that improve and enrich the environment of school
- enhancing expertise about the significance and meaning of the environment: for instance, through the creative practitioners employed and the tools and insights they bring with them
- providing spaces where students and teachers can expand their sense of who they are allowed to be
- supporting reflection on time as well as space in debates about the creative curriculum
- acknowledging difference, drawing on creativity discourses that tend to value diversity above conformity
- creative work that is demanding and yields results of high quality, sometimes surprising both students and teachers

Section B: Literature review

B.1   Why ethos?

It is conventional for literature reviews to begin with definitions of the key terms they are to consider. This uncontroversial starting point, however, functions to confirm their relevance, usefulness and significance: how particular concepts are defined is in this sense less important than the fact that they have been included. This can in turn constrain debate if it precludes questions that problematise their very presence in our thinking. Accordingly, in this first section we step back to locate a broader context for the debate about school ethos as a whole. (Why) has ethos become a significant educational concept now? Why ethos rather than other related terms? What 'work' does it do for those who use it, what does it achieve? What is its history, with what schools of thought is it associated?

Several commentators have already observed that 'school ethos' and related terms such as culture or climate had little currency before the 1980s, but have since come to be very much 'in the vocabulary' of educationalists (Gavienas and White, 2008; Prosser, 1999; Smith, 2003). We can identify a number of reasons for this:

B.1.1   Marketisation: beyond the 'bog-standard' ethos

Since the 1988 Education Act, the school system in England and Wales has experienced various market-oriented reforms encouraging diversity of educational provision. Amongst the consequences of these have been, firstly, a greater perceived need for publicising and self-promotion, and secondly, attempts by schools to evolve a 'distinctive ethos' or branding in order to mark their difference from competitor institutions. Successive government policies have explicitly encouraged this: for example, applicants for Specialist School status were required to demonstrate how their school ethos would change as a result of specialism (DFES 2001), whilst the powers accrued by the private sponsors of Academies include deciding on the school's ethos as well as on its curriculum and appointing managers. The Department for Education (DfE, formerly the DfES), issues advice and guidance on schools marketing. 'Ethos' now also figures in school admissions policies, for instance in cases where faith schools can select pupils they consider better able to 'benefit' from the school's ethos' or whose parents 'fully support' it – a criterion identified by more than one commentator as a proxy for social selection based on race and class (Toynbee, 2006a, b; Jenkins, 2005).

B.1.2   Ethos and School Effectiveness

As we shall see, for many the significance of ethos lies primarily in its presumed power – in what it 'does' rather than what it 'is'. Some educationalists writing about ethos do so in cautious terms suggesting limits in this respect: for instance, McLaughlin remarks that educational influence is seen to involve, '*shaping* the dispositions, virtues, character and practical judgement of persons in a *milieu* in which tradition, habit and emulation play an important role' (2005); Halstead gives a definition of ethos (2000: see below) and observes that all its elements 'are rich in their *potential* to *influence* the *developing* values, attitudes and personal qualities of children and young people' (our emphasis in all cases). Munn accords ethos a useful but modest role in developing teachers as reflective professionals: 'ethos affects our practice… So it helps us to understand why we act in particular ways and why our actions can be different in different schools' (2008).

However, those associated with the Schools Effectiveness and School Improvement (SESI) movement that gathered momentum in the wake of Rutter et al's influential study (1979) have been more emphatic in their claims about ethos. A considerable body of literature now identifies a link between some kinds of school ethos and school effectiveness (Mortimore, 1988, Thacker and

McInerney, 1992, Glover and Law, 2004), or between 'positive and healthy' organizational climate and school success as Van der Westhuizen et al (2005) describe it: further studies attempt to identify the cultures of school that create the best learning environments (e.g. Glover, 2004) or that positively affect teachers' behaviour, identities, retention, professional development and so on, and then in turn improve student outcomes (Flores, 2006; Harrison, 2006; Kukla-Acevedo, 2009; McGinty et al, 2008; Sweetland and Hoy, 2000). A particular concern is with how ethos may improve schools in areas of socio-economic deprivation or with disadvantaged populations (Gaziel, 1997; Strahan, 2003; Muijs, 2004). Morris (1995, 1998) makes use of OFSTED judgements including on ethos (defined by factors ranging from 'pupils' moral and spiritual development' to attendance and punctuality) to claim that Catholic secondary schools are more effective than others in the maintained sector – although the sample of the former was relatively small, and some of the reasons he adduces for this, such as congruence between home and school cultures in attitudes to education, authority, hierarchy and the like, would not necessarily be replicable in more diverse contexts. Other researchers suggest that culture or ethos is able to mitigate or mediate the effects of other educational practices or characteristics such as ability grouping (Hallam, 2004) or school size (Opedenacker, 2009).

Such work has been used to argue that if schools change their ethos or cultural environment (to resemble that of more successful institutions), they might thereby improve pupil and institutional outcomes, even without changes to other factors such as pupil intake or quality of school premises.

This idea of what ethos can achieve has long appealed to policy makers and politicians, most recently the current government Education Minister Michael Gove who has expressed his own conviction that 'for a school what matters is not its intake, but its ethos' (Brogan, 2009). Perhaps this is unsurprising since it carries an upbeat and optimistic message about education's potential to deliver greater opportunities and social mobility: schools with the right ethos can indeed 'make a difference', as the SESI slogan has it. As we will see, however, there are some paradoxes at the heart of this debate. For instance, on the one hand ethos is seen as immensely powerful in shaping the values, attitudes and conduct of those within a school; but on the other, it is extremely slippery and difficult to define. Secondly, many believe – perhaps because ethos is so often defined as something intangible, almost transcendental – that it is correspondingly undemanding in terms of resources, as if it can conjure its positive impact out of nothing. A recent document on ethos and culture by Teach First is particularly explicit about these supposed fiscal advantages, claiming repeatedly that a focus on ethos can provide 'huge benefits for very little financial cost, and thus offers a way of improving schools even in an era of austerity' (Teach First 2010: 11; also cf. 17, 29, 30). Our own view, however, is that this case tends to be overstated and rather simplistic in ignoring some very pressing material constraints on what schools are able to do.

Although the connection between ethos and attainment helps explain why the former has received so much attention, it is very far from being proven – indeed, we would caution strongly against uncritical acceptance of the idea that changing ethos will impact in any simple or direct way on results. Although space does not allow a full discussion here, the SESI case has been contested on many fronts. The correlation provided by statistical analysis is not proof of causation (Stables, 2003); and as Fleischman and Heppen (2009) point out, few reforms take place alone or can be shown to have conclusive success. SESI has been criticized for its political-ideological nature, its theoretical limitations (e.g. Weiner, 2002, Goldstein, 2000, Thrupp, 2001a, 2001 b, 2002), the polarizing and other unintended consequences of judgements about 'good' and 'bad' schools and its implicit 'deficit model' (Weiner 2002, Thrupp et al, 2003), the inappropriateness of assimilating educational research to scientific or medical models (Slee et al, 1998, Slee and Weiner, 2001; Schneider, 2007). Recently, one of the most authoritative commentators in this area, Steven Gorard (2010), has described SE research as a 'voodoo science', criticising its methods, its reliance on inadequate data sets, the unpredictability and uncertainty of its results, the political purposes to which they are put, and the failure of the approach to provide information about school effects for

different groups of young people. In addition, he argues that it has had the effect of marginalizing questions about the other purposes or benefits of education, and has monopolized research resources at the expense of other inquiries into the complex effects of school reform.

B.1.3   Ethos *for* learning

Many educationalists would agree with Thomson (2010) that SESI may have underestimated the complexities of school change. Nonetheless, as Thomson also notes, there is broad agreement that addressing schools' failure to meet the needs of all their students requires as one focus 'activities that promote social learning motivation, and improve school ethos' (Thomson, 2010: 31). Such aspects are sometimes referred to as the '(pre-)conditions of learning' and it is in this general sense that ethos is also often discussed.

Munn (2008) and Gavienas and White (2008) discuss ethos in relation to the slightly less cosy term 'discipline': 'good' behaviour is a prerequisite for learning, as bullying, or too much disruption from some students in a classroom, will prevent others being able to learn. They distinguish, however, between what they see as traditionally punitive and often brutal methods of enforcing obedience, and more enlightened approaches in which appropriate behaviour codes are established collectively and co-operatively and thus gain the individual's active consent – and it is to the latter that they apply the term 'ethos'. Similarly, McCluskey et al (2008) discuss 'restorative' practices in schools in Scotland as a means to maintain relationships and positive ethos (see also Gregory, 2009; Kane, 2009). Freiberg (2009 discusses 'person-centred management' as a humane alternative to discipline problems, and argues that it emulates 'pro-social learner dynamics' of: (a) social-emotional emphasis, (b) school connectedness, (c) positive school and classroom climate, and (d) student self-discipline.

Although ethos undoubtedly relates to behaviour, we should nonetheless be wary where the term is used to describe little more than an enforced code of conduct – as is suggested, for instance, by statements such as this: 'in a school with a strong ethos and culture, a pupil can learn in any classroom and know that certain actions will be met with comparable responses regardless of classroom, subject or teacher…Pupils know what is not permitted…' (Teach First, 2010: 20).

Somewhat ironically, given its association with marketisation, the concept of ethos has provided a means to challenge what are seen as the negative effects of 'performative' and competitive cultures, such as a narrowed curriculum, teaching to the test, less support for students' individual needs, a punitive disciplinary regime and a focus on the 'well-behaved majority' - all of which can reduce students' enjoyment of school (Brooks and Tough, 2006; Stevens, 2007). The previous government's policy initiative for primary schools, Excellence and Enjoyment (DfES, 2003) refers repeatedly to ethos and connects it to the concept of a more creative curriculum, whilst its support for Creative Partnerships and other creativity initiatives might also show concern for broader issues about school cultures and student experiences, not only attainment.

Ethos can also justify greater attention to the emotional climate of schools, to non-cognitive, emotional and social learning and other important aspects of schools' work that may not be reflected in test scores. Asked about schools they attended, many people would acknowledge that their memories of what the building, their teachers and their fellow students looked like are somewhat hazy or unreliable; many would struggle to recall in any detail the content of their lessons. What endures, however, and often retains its intensity across decades in somatically re-experienced pain, pleasure, embarrassment and humiliation, is *how it made them feel.*

Some educationalists argue that the nature of social interactions in schools is a key aspect of student and staff well-being (contributing to the conditions for learning) (Raider Roth et al, 2008) and others suggest that we should conceive of schools as fundamentally 'relational' organizations

(Smyth, 2005). Many studies claim to show the positive effects of good relationships with teachers for achievement (Fredricks, 2004, Martin, 2003; Martin et al, 2007). Themes that emerge from these studies focus on the significance of 'respect' and 'caring'. For instance, Matsamura (2008) claims that 'respect by teachers' is good for teaching and students, Meece (2003) that students 'reported more positive forms of motivation and academic engagement' when they felt their teachers were using learner-centered practices that involve 'caring, establishing higher order thinking, honoring student voices, and adapting instruction to individual needs'. Ryan (2001) correlates student motivation and engagement positively to 'perceptions of teacher support and fostering mutual respect and interaction'. Sava (2002) suggests that teachers who prefer a custodial, controlling approach to pupils induce more conflict with them, whilst their students are more likely to report educational, psychological and somatic complaints. Martin and Dowson's 2009 literature review discusses the role of interpersonal relationships in students' academic motivation, engagement, and achievement. Osterman (2000) notes that schools' 'organizational practices' neglect and may actually undermine students' experience of 'membership in a supportive community', a feeling of 'belonging' it is argued they need to experience for multiple reasons. Murray-Harvey (2007) reports on an Australian study showing that the quality of a student's experience of school is most accurately represented by the inter-relationship of both academic and social/emotional outcomes which are influenced in large part by the quality of the relationships (supportive or stressful) among students, not only with peers and families but also with teachers who exert 'just as strong, and a sometimes stronger influence, on students' well-being. These 'relationships' are not often defined in terms of gender, although some research suggests there is less closeness, more conflict in relationships with boys (Koepke, 2008). Raider-Roth et al (2008).

Putting students and relationships at the centre of educational concerns is often linked to a progressive agenda and draws on the language of critical pedagogy. Rietveld (2008) presents data arguing that the nature of relationships affects inclusion and exclusion, and that 'these were shaped at all levels of the centre or school's educational culture and ethos'. Harris (2008) argues that 'only when schools have a central and demonstrable concern with the primacy of relationships in teaching and learning… will it be possible to reclaim the ground that has been eroded by successive marketising and managerialist agendas'; Smyth (2005) similarly believes that affirming relationships runs against 'the damaging and prevailing managerialist ethos'. Guajardo (2008) lists strong relationships as a cornerstone of transformative pedagogy; Hadjioannou (2007) argues that they support 'authentic /dialogic' discussions; Hatt (2005) uses the term 'pedagogical love' for the process of teachers and students actively participating in the understandings and knowledge that co-emerge in the transactional curriculum. Keddie (2008) argues that we need to 'go beyond the teacher/student binary hierarchy' in order to allow 'theorizing of self and critical literacy'.

An emphasis on well-being and relationships offers a more contextual understanding of learning, allowing it to be seen as a situated practice rather than isolated 'event'. Well-being measures often look beyond the 'self' to the structures, systems, social support (or social capital) and networks that enable it (The Young Foundation, 2010; see also Maroulis, 2001; Pooley, 2005; Muthukrishna and Sader, 2004 on social capital theory and education).

However, we should also note a problematic tendency in some accounts to suggest that school ethos is 'for' learning, whereas the cultures beyond the school are somehow 'against' learning. For instance, the Teach First report on ethos notes that 'Educational disadvantage in the UK is closely correlated with socio-economic status'. Almost immediately, however, it asserts that:

> For some pupils, their home life will provide them with an ethos and culture that values education and educational success but, for others, this isn't the case. Therefore, in these circumstances, a school needs to create an ethos and culture that values education as the first step to addressing educational inequality

In this account, material factors involved in educational disadvantage (lack of adequate housing, nourishment, warmth, space to study, funds to buy books, paper, private tutoring, computers and software, familiarity with educational processes, procedures and practices etc) are barely acknowledged. The source of educational failure is located primarily in students' benighted home lives, in contrast to which schools are depicted as beacons of salvation and civilization. Offensive stereotypes of impoverished families are sadly only too familiar in many public debates; they are however particularly disappointing when reproduced by those on a self-appointed mission to lead schools and spearhead educational change.

B.1.4   Ethos *as* learning

Gorard (2010) argues that schools are 'mini-societies' that offer important learning experiences for young people, about, for instance, 'how to interact, what to expect from wider society and how to judge fairness'. In relation to citizenship education, Rudduck and Fielding (2006) distinguish between teaching formally *about* democracy, for instance in the citizenship curriculum (an investment for the future) and enacting democratic principles in the daily life of the school (a commitment to the present). Many educationalists concerned about issues ranging from citizenship and participation to positive relationships, self-discipline and emotional literacy, have argued for just such 'commitment to the present' on the grounds that young people will be better able to practice what they have actually experienced. Gorard's 2008 study of 13,000 fifteen year olds from across Europe demonstrates that developing a sense of justice and social cohesion is as much a product of young people's experiences in schools as of formal educational processes (Gorard, 2008). That is, where pupils were treated well in school and experienced, for instance, 'student voice', mixed ethnic, gender and religious groupings and less hierarchical relationships, they also had a positive outlook on trust, civic values and sense of justice. (A more positive finding than John who in 1992 explored evidence for influence of ethos on citizenship attitudes and concluded that evidence was marginal.)

Similar arguments have been circulating for considerable time: Lister (1989), outlining the essential ingredients of a school ethos that would enhance the growth of positive citizenship attitudes, included a participatory framework with a less formal atmosphere, fewer petty rules and regulations and less deference to authority; White argued in 1999 that civic education should begin in primary schools, through the kinds of organization and ethos that would help students become 'certain sorts of people' who could exercise civic virtues. Whitehead (2004) argues that more democratic forms of relations in the school are prerequisites of pupil participation and voice, and Henkenborg (2009) proposes that school ethos and organization should reflect democratic values. Arthur and Davison (2000) encourage greater attention to students' positive experience of social relations to foster 'social literacy'.

However, as Pike (2007) and others have argued, these less visible forms of citizenship education, which address for instance, ethics and values across the curriculum or the impact of assessment policies on school ethos, receive insufficient attention (see also Norberg, 2006). We would add to this that arguments about the significance of what students learn from their experience of schooling – which we broadly accept – tend to be critical of much existing practice and to advocate change towards more democratic, participatory and caring cultures. We have not yet encountered academic literature that justifies authoritarian and hierarchical school cultures in terms of the valuable learning opportunities they provide (rather than enable) for students, or that explicitly discusses the ideal social structure they reflect. Yet, as we shall see, such issues are highly pertinent to all discussions of ethos and should not be overlooked.

B.2   Defining ethos

The place of ethos in much current educational thinking and debates makes it all the more important to know how to define it; how to identify it *in situ*; how to effect change in ethos, and what impact that change might have. However, there are few convincing answers to such questions.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines ethos as the 'characteristic spirit, prevalent tone of sentiment' informing a human environment. School ethos, however, is an 'imprecise term' (Halstead, 2000) and as Donnelly remarks, one that remains 'very resistant to satisfactory definition and, thus, effective empirical explorations' (2000: 134). Halstead (2000) suggests that:

> the term 'ethos' encompasses the nature of relationships within a school, the dominant forms of social interaction, the attitudes and expectations of teachers, the learning climate, the way that conflicts are resolved, the physical environment, links with parents and the local community, patterns of communication, the nature of pupil involvement in the school, discipline procedures, anti-bullying and anti-racist policies, management styles, the school's underlying philosophy and aims and the system of caring.

Smith (2003) proposes that school ethos embraces all

> aspects of school culture, climate and philosophy that impinge directly on pupil's affective and cognitive learning and are perceived by all school's stakeholders. It is constructed through an interaction between the culture mix of teachers, pupils, parents, the local community and the school's official values system- mediated through organizational structures and processes and also by staff culture, climate and competence.

Both these definitions raise as many tensions and dilemmas as they resolve, however. In the first place, they are so broad as to cover almost everything about a school, which is unhelpful and circular. Secondly, in both cases, some aspects of ethos are said to reside in what is consciously intended or perceived (in mission statements, policy documents and procedures, adherence to particular management styles or value sets, accounts articulated by school members and so on). But other elements of it need to be extrapolated from what is implicit and often unnoticed, 'part of the "taken for granted" about school life' (Munn, 2002; see also Munn, Lloyd and Cullen, 2000). Ethos is also said to be subjective, something that is 'felt' rather than 'thought' (McLaughlin, 2005, Jeffrey and Woods, 2003). Whilst only the very naïve would be surprised by Donnelly's argument that 'the ethos described formally in school documentation or defined by school authorities often departs considerably from the ethos which emerges from the intentions, interactions and behaviour of school members' (2000: 137), it does indicate the difficulties of identifying ethos in practice, as we discuss below.

A third issue concerns how far ethos can be conceptualised as an objective and measurable phenomenon, existing independently of the people and social events in an organization. Such an account of ethos would suggest that it is amenable to manipulation and change, perhaps from the top-down; which may help explain its currency amongst organizations and individuals providing 'culture change' services to schools. However, it seems curiously depopulated and inert. If, as Smith implies, ethos arises from the interaction – and the agency - of different elements and groups (in which even the physical environment, mentioned by Halstead, plays a part), then both ethos and attempts to change it come to seem more challenging, locally variable and unpredictable.

Finally, as with Eisner's reflection that ethos 'refers to the underlying deep structure of a culture, the values that animate it, that collectively constitute its way of life' (2002: 4), Smith's reference to

families and local communities beyond the school raises the question of boundaries: does it make sense to talk about school ethos, 'culture' or 'way of life' as if it is something a single institution can possess and control regardless of the circumstances in which it finds itself? And on the other hand, if understanding ethos requires some account of contextual and mediating factors, how far and how widely should we look to find those that are pertinent? - Should analysis confine itself to individuals and groups within the school's immediate orbit, or consider how ethos might be shaped by educational policies, by social, economic and cultural conditions, by local, regional or national pressure groups and traditions, even by forces such as capitalism, globalisation and neo-liberalism? – Some dismiss references to the latter factors as at best irrelevant, at worst 'alibis for failure', a form of special pleading advanced only by those who wish to excuse poor results and justify educational inaction. Others point out that since what is at stake is evaluative (and potentially harsh) judgement on schools, then neglecting to consider the wider structures within which schools operate is itself profoundly unjust (Thrupp, 2002). We would add that to sideline the social and to reject theory in this way is also to abandon the effort to understand how the world works – which, in the context of education, hardly seems an appropriate example to set.

B.3.   Situating the debate

In order to clarify the meaning of ethos, and the issues and perspectives at stake, this section considers some 'families' of related concepts and explores their subtly different functions, valences and connotations (cf. Allder, 1993). The comparison suggests that ethos lacks the theoretical underpinning, conceptual coherence or moral/political motivation of terms like micro-politics, habitus, ecology or hidden curriculum. Like 'climate' it is conveniently vague, albeit with the advantage that its Greek etymology provides a patina of scholarship that a meteorological metaphor does not. It is often a vehicle for uncritically importing ideas from business management literature to education. However, its imprecision also means it can be incorporated within more established intellectual traditions.

B.3.1   School Climate

School 'climate' claims to have the longest history as an object of concern in education – more than a century (Cohen, 2009) - but is perhaps also the least theorized. Even in 1987 it was claimed that this was an 'outmoded metaphor' (Finlayson, 1987). Whilst it is still in use (Kantarova, 2009, Kartal, 2009, Karwowski, 2007, 2008: Preble, 2008), some definitions of it – such as Hansen's (1998) 'a school where people like to be', or the vagueness with which 'positive' school climate is suggested as a feature of effective schools (Townsend, 1997) - reinforce a sense that it is an empty signifier for 'better' schools, whose meaning shifts with the trends of the time. Macbeath (1999) offers a more nuanced account of climate, connecting it with a hierarchy of material (time and space), social (social context and relations) and psychological needs, which is observable in the way people treat and think about each other and how 'happy', safe and engaged people 'seem' to feel. However, on the whole work on climate tends to fall into the positivist domain, with fairly bland, limited or problematic definitions of what aspects of climate matter and a sense that these can be easily identified and determined. For example, for Grayson (2008) the components of school climate are: parent/community relations, administration, and student behavioural values; Kantarova (2009) lists them as '1) the overall attitude to school and the motivation to study: 2) teachers' qualifes (sic) and competence; 3) school rules and discipline in class; 4) the solidarity of the class as a social group; 5) the architectural, aesthetic and hygienic aspects of the school'. School climate of course may feel very different to various members of the school community, and indeed perhaps the most interesting finding to emerge from Kantarova's survey was how much less satisfied pupils were with the school climate than either teachers or parents.

B.3.2   Organisational culture

The sociologist Paul du Gay (1997) has analyzed the 'turn to culture' in business and management thinking from the 1980s onwards, which associated culture with organizational success. According to this 'turn', it was not enough only to discipline the body of the worker (through practices such as clocking in and out to verify physical presence); now 'hearts and minds' had to be engaged, and 'meaning' had to be managed. Working practices (mission statements, internal markets or autonomous units within bigger organisations, contractual relationships, performance related pay, appraisal reviews and so on) attempted to inculcate new habits, dispositions and forms of conduct through which workers would come to identify with their employing organization, and thereby enable it to gain competitive advantage.

In such literature, culture is treated as a variable, something an organisation 'has' and can be controlled (sometimes called 'values engineering' (Morgan, 1997)). It is defined from the perspective and for the purposes of management – for instance, as 'strong' where it supports organisational aims, 'toxic' or 'weak' where it might thwart them. Deal and Peterson have applied this 'new' management theory to schools in a string of highly popular publications, toolkits and consultancies (e.g. Deal and Peterson, 1999, 2009; Deal and Kennedy, 1983). Their descriptions of school cultures in terms of 'tribes', 'customs, rituals, symbols, stories and language' (Deal and Kennedy, 1982) appear more anthropological than corporate, although this vocabulary is geared rather expediently towards both the requirements of school leaders and the solutions the authors themselves supply. One cannot help but wonder whether the definition below, for example, is worded and structured in such a way as to suggest that the answer to culture-change comes in the form of some motivational posters (on sale in the foyer):

> The unwritten rules and assumptions, the combinations of rituals and traditions, the array of symbols and artifacts, the special language and phrasing that staff and students use, and the expectations about change and learning that saturate the school 'world'.
>
> (Peterson and Deal, 2009: 5)

Acknowledging the tacit, however, does show the difficulty of shaping culture to desired ends, and ensuring values and norms are passed on to newcomers. Schein, for example, defines culture as 'a pattern of shared basic assumptions' and beliefs that become 'taken for granted' in an organisation's view of itself (Schein, 1985: 19). As culture is a product of the experience of social groups, new members need to be taught it so that they come to accept it as 'the correct way you perceive, think, and feel' (Schein, op cit; 1997). One danger here might be that, like the no longer fashionable concept of 'socialisation' (describing how individuals acquire the prevailing values, norms, ideologies and roles of society: see e.g. Kapferer, 1981), such definitions can be interpreted in reductive ways, assuming a unidirectional flow of a singular culture and a relatively blank subject who passively 'receives' it.

These approaches differ from sociological ones in that they tend not to ask whose interests are served by different cultures; they do not address power (Hartley, 2007), and often see dissent and resistance primarily as obstacles to overcome. Smith (2003) argues that 'organisational culture' implies something 'created and experienced by employees' and is therefore inappropriate in relation to educational bodies. The specificity of schooling, its difference from other institutions, is highly pertinent in discussing ethos and culture, and worth dwelling on here to explain why.

Let us grant, for instance, that a business enterprise is indeed entitled to implement practices aiming to inculcate values and fealty and to ensure staff enact its desired culture – particularly if it offers rewards for doing so. Teach First's report on ethos and culture (2010) proposes that similar approaches would improve schools; but it ignores crucial differences. Firstly, students are not employees and in many cases they have little choice as to the institution they attend. They cannot

be compelled to agree with mission statements, especially discriminatory ones (e.g. that establish 'higher education as a goal for all pupils', Teach First, 2010: 35). Secondly, teachers could be said to owe allegiance not only to the particular school where they work, but to the wider community and the public good; valuing independent and critical scholarship might be one expression of this. Advocating in-school teacher training on the grounds that teachers '*need* inducting into the ethos and culture of an *individual* school' (ibid: 36, our emphasis) appears to celebrate narrowing of vision and the (re)production of compliance. The multi-site placements of university-based teacher training provide breadth of experience, but more importantly, points of comparison and contrast to provoke reflection and a sense of how things might be 'otherwise' (cf Munn, 2008, as cited p.5 above).

Finally, it is hard to identify an educational rationale for requiring consensus amongst a diverse body of staff and students. Mission statements, 'motivational sayings', flags, crests and slogans attempting to convey values to which all can or must subscribe (repeatedly instanced approvingly by Teach First: eg 2010: 18, 19, 22, 23, 24, 31, 33, 35, 38) are notoriously irrelevant or meaningless when viewed 'from below'. Rather than trying harder to refine and enforce them, there may be more pedagogic value in encouraging critical analysis, parody, re-writing and dissent in response. For instance, it would be interesting to debate the educational philosophy expressed in the slogan 'No Excuses' by one Teach First ambassador (ibid: 18) shows a reprehensible lack of interest in young people's lives outside school and might justifiably be parodied as 'Never Explain: Do Not Attempt to Understand'.

B.3.3 Micropolitics, hidden curriculum, habitus, ecology

The terms considered so far have been criticized for conveying a misleading impression of cohesion and weaknesses in tackling power and justice (cf. Prosser, 1999); issues that are central concerns of the concepts in this section. The concept of 'micro-politics', for example, has been used (mainly in studies of teachers' professional development) to highlight the power relations and struggles beneath the surface of institutions, and to articulate the informal learning and underlying frames that come to play in different groupings within the school (e.g.: Ball, 1987, Achinstein, 2002, Chen, 2008, Schemp et al, 1993). In contrast to some usages of ethos, it emphasizes and shows the difficulty and tensions of change.

The notion of hidden curriculum refers to how knowledge is selected, organised and valued within the formal curriculum, and the messages this then contains for pupils. For instance, the majority of children learn to fail (Holt, 1964) because of the overvaluing of the cognitive-intellectual; at best they learn how to play the game of education and please the teacher; the dominance of examinations encourages a focus only on what might be assessed: and all of these reduce authentic learning (Apple, 1979; Snyder, 1971; Bowles and Gintis, 1976, Giroux and Purpel, 1983; Fielding, 1981; Wren, 1999: and, for an updated and contemporary analysis and example, see Thomson et al, 2010). The concept forms part of a leftwing critique of the education system as a whole, which is held to perpetuate inequalities rather than offer opportunities for advancement, and which is denounced in strongly moral terms: the effect of the hidden curriculum is described as an assault on many pupils' 'dignity', for example. 'Dignity' here refers in part to people's creative, inventive capacities, and indeed the alternatives put forward frequently foreground the importance of creativity and the need to recognise affective, emotional, social and not just cognitive skills and abilities; thus in 1983 David Hargreaves proposes that up to the age of 14 all students should follow a curriculum that devotes 50% of its time to the expressive arts, in order to promote social cohesion (Hargreaves, 1983).

Bourdieu's sociological tools have been extensively mobilised in theoretically-informed attempts to understand educational success and failure in terms of social processes, rather than individual abilities or lack thereof. The concept of the habitus describes a system of 'durable dispositions'

towards culture (that is, tastes, cultural preferences, knowledge and judgements) instilled at conscious and unconscious levels and acquired in the first instance in the family and home environment (Bourdieu, 1984: 169-225). Class-based differences in habitus become socially functional in schools because the habitus of middle-class students and parents mirrors what is seen as valuable knowledge, and this 'cultural capital' increases their chances of successful educational careers (see e.g. Ball, 2003). There is some debate about whether a 'habitus' can be attributed to or be characteristic of an institution, since the term is usually applied to individuals. Arguing that it can, Reay distinguishes between habitus as an individual attribute and an institutional habitus that involves 'a rich interlacing of past and present, individual and collective', and which mediates individual habitus (Reay, 1998, 2004).

Smith (2003) describes an 'ecological' approach to ethos that also draws on Bourdieu to highlight the interplay between the habitus of individuals and of social institutions. He concludes that it is difficult to impose an 'official' ethos as both kinds of habitus are continually being constructed and re-constructed and there is 'a dynamic tension among several types of ecological factor'. 'Ecology' has appeared as a metaphor in a range of educational writings (e.g.: Goodlad, 1987; Matusov, 1999; McCaughtry et al, 2008). Some use it to support a Vygotskyan view of the child as thoroughly embedded in social contexts and relations, as opposed to the Piagetian asocial model of child development. Bronfenbenner (1977) used the term as a challenge to developmental psychology to study natural situations rather than artificial experimental ones, and to be more sensitive to the many different levels, or systems, of organization making up the context of human development. He included, for instance, interactions between the 'micro-systems' of the family and the school, as well as macro-systems of cultural beliefs and events. Recent researchers have drawn on 'neo-institutional' theory that focuses primary attention on, 'the effects of cultural belief systems operating in the environment of organisations rather than on intra-organisational processes' (Scott, 2001: 44, cited in Smith op cit). In some ecological perspectives, the school is viewed as a system trying to maintain itself and the status quo in the face of increasing pressures to change; in others, the emphasis is placed on changes at whole-school – and other – levels, and on and social and cultural factors, rather than on diagnoses and solutions that only address individuals (e.g. Swenson, 2006). Ecology therefore highlights questions of context and wider environment beyond the school, which are addressed inadequately if at all in much of the literature on ethos.

B.3.4   Anthropological and sociological perspectives on culture

'Culture' has been proposed by a number of educationalists as the most appropriate word to use when trying to make sense of the life of a school. Solvason (2005) argues that it is more 'solid', tangible and accessible as a concept than ethos, and moreover that ethos is the product of the culture of a school: but in much writing the two are used in less clearly differentiated ways. Culture, like ethos, is usually held to include both formal and informal manifestations, implicit and explicit elements, values and beliefs. Prosser describes school culture as:

> an unseen, and unobservable force behind school activities, a unifying theme that provides meaning, direction, and mobilisation for school members. It has both concrete representation in the form of artefacts and behavioural norms, and is sustained implicitly by jargon, metaphors and rites. (Prosser, 1999: 13)

One body of work draws on the sophisticated conceptualisations of culture developed within sociology, ethnography and anthropology, to produce finely nuanced accounts and 'thick descriptions' illuminating the complexity of school life and the dynamism and interplay of different elements. A central concern of this work has been to understand educational experiences, resistance and failure, not least by examining the dynamic relationships between school cultures, youth, peer and home sub- and counter-cultures and wider socio-economic and

political change.

One example is Willis's (1977) study of working-class boys and cultural processes within school. The conflict between class habitus and school ethos, he argued, produced a sub-culture with its own definition of valuable knowledge: it offered a meaningful alternative to the school's vision, but it also had a strong relation to unskilled work. Willis's work is discussed by Stevens (2007) as an instance of the 'differentiation-polarization' theory, which holds internal school processes responsible for amplifying family background effects and disadvantaging working-class pupils, who are overrepresented in lower ability groups due (it is claimed) to the middle-class nature of school expectations (Ball, 1981; Lacey, 1970). 'Polarization' can be a response to differentiation: anti-school subcultures are formed in opposition to the school-dominated, normative culture, with the ultimate effect that working-class pupils conform to the (lower) expectations that (middle-class) teachers hold of them, and develop disaffected subcultural attitudes, as Willis shows.

These studies did not set out to provide tools for school management; they respected the value, complexity and insights of working-class cultures, and advocated a more egalitarian reconstruction of curriculum and knowledge (for a fuller, passionate and inspiring account, see Jones, 2009). They suggest the importance of educationalists learning about and understanding the home and peer group cultures of their students, especially of potential drop-outs (see Schlosser, 1992). They continue to be influential. Relatively recently, Tsolidis (2006) has investigated subcultures related to achievement; whilst in another analysis sensitized to issues of class, Hempel-Jorgenson (2009) found that in a working class school, pupil learner identities were more passive and dominated by issues of discipline and behaviour compared to a middle class one that focused on academic performance, suggesting that current 'testing culture' has a greater negative effect on working-class than middle-class students. (This argument suggests that developing a more creative school ethos would be both a greater challenge and potentially more enriching in disadvantaged schools.)

Increasingly, cultural studies of education analyze class in relation to gender, ethnicity and sexuality (Nayak, 2003; Swain, 2006; Youdell, 2005). For instance, Smith (2007) and Abraham (2008) debated in the journal *Gender and Education* how far 'hegemonic masculinity' in working class cultures can be said to be anti-learning, with Abraham arguing against this that 'hegemonic masculinity' might instead be fused with anti-school values produced by organisational differentiation. Read (2008) analyses the complex gendered and class dimensions of two contrasting discourses – 'traditional' disciplinarian and 'progressive' liberal – on the power relation between teacher and pupil. She thereby challenges simplistic (and pejorative) ideas about the supposed 'feminised' educational culture of primary schools; as we shall see, these two discourses reappear also in discussions of ethos. Other recent ethnographic work counters what has been seen as the mechanistic pessimism of earlier 'social reproduction' theses by considering possibilities for agency, and – to summarise rather crudely - locating them in the very complexity of culture. Yon (2000) for example argues that culture is elusive, an 'open text' providing a repertoire of meanings rather than an already-written script that must be followed; while Proweller (1999) argues of 'the intersections of race and class discourses in private school culture', that these are 'resources' that create 'the conditions for meaning-making' rather than determining outcomes.

B.4 Creativity, schools and learning

This section looks at some writing on creative school ethos, on why creativity matters, and that conceives learning as akin to creative processes. The arguments here are at once theoretical and empirical, descriptive and prescriptive, about the present and about the future. For example: the 'social' perspectives on learning that we discuss below rest on a view of humans as being, inevitably, social – dependent on and brought into being by the collaborative achievement of

language, shaped by context and environment, only ever emerging from collective human endeavour. Learning in these accounts is not an individual, cognitive process happening in some interior mental space, but always draws on social resources (most obviously, language, but also, others in the sense of those with whom one dialogues in the process of learning, and the material environment). This conceptualization is also argued to provide a better, more adequate, description of learning – in the sense that if one observes educational processes, it will explain more fully what one sees, account for more features of what is happening – and to point to reforms that encompass and build on such insights. It can also become part of a vision for a future and better world: for instance, suggesting that our current globalised economies and interrelated cultures and our awareness of the fragile ecological balance required for sustainability, means that societies need people who can work with others, cooperate, communicate, contribute their own knowledge to a collective and bigger whole to find new solutions to pressing problems; who are able to look beyond their own horizons and selfish needs, to consider benefits or losses to wider communities – including animals, objects, ecosystems as well as humans – and to do so not only in strictly rational terms but with sensitivity to meanings and values. The many ideas touched on here are, of course, complex and differentiated, and we cannot hope to do justice to them here. However, one of the report's key arguments is that claims about 'ethos' are always also about perceptions and ideals of society and the nature of learning; we hope to indicate the kinds of perspectives the literature in this section takes on such issues.

Jeffrey and Woods (2003) describe the 'creative ethos' of a primary school in which they researched and observed over many years, using the terms 'dynamism, appreciation, captivation and care'. A sense of 'captivation' suggests the value and pleasure that adults and young people enjoy in a creative school. They point to the importance of the school's understanding of young people as active agents who experiment with their bodies, emotions and intellects; its valuing of the everyday, communal knowledge of pupils, families and peer groups; and its promotion of an ethic of care, respect and friendliness. John-Steiner's studies (2000) similarly argue that creative individuals combine discipline with playfulness, but that this is a 'rigorous sustained labour of nurturing, shaping and developing imaginative leaps', for which motivation arises out of mutual support.

Jeffrey and Woods depict learning as a thoroughly social activity rather than an individual enterprise. Similarly, Cape UK's research in four 'creative' schools (2010) noted that the schools drew on a wide range of people – such as parents, local art and craft practitioners - to assist in the learning experience. They claim that this helped foster respect for diverse contributions, and a mutual learning culture in which roles become more fluid, as students, parents and others can become teachers and teachers position themselves as learners alongside their students. In addition, Jeffrey and Woods suggest that allowing staff to follow and develop their interests and concerns results in a staff body who agree on basic values but are free to express differences in a trusting environment, rather than one that is compulsorily corporate or compliant. Adams (2010) suggests a link with contemporary art practice, where the significance of processes of social engagement, playfulness and experimentation are also recognized.

Themes of diversity, difference, engagement and flux also appear in discussions of the benefits and impacts of creativity. For instance, Craft claims that the 'creative process' itself offers students and teachers specific kinds of experiences, such as encouraging individuals to be open to possibility, the unknown and the unexpected, to make connections between apparently unconnected ideas, to embrace different ways of knowing, to 'hold tension' between safety and risk and be willing to give and receive criticism (Craft, 2000). These are seen as all the more important in a context of excessive caution and increasing constraints on young people's lives that limit their opportunities to learn through risk-taking and experimentation. In relation to learning more generally, she discusses the concept of 'possibility thinking' where students are encouraged to approach learning across the curriculum with a 'what if?' attitude. Others have suggested that creative approaches

may encourage young people to ask (critical and philosophical) questions, moving away from a bland conformity towards a more active, engaged stance towards the world (Jeffrey and Woods, 1997). Tasks involving roleplay, story-telling or design foreground 'process' and require creative and imaginative responses from those involved (Batsleer, 2008). Young people are thereby encouraged to experiment with the self, to see things from other perspectives, play with ideas and take ownership of knowledge in order to make it personally meaningful (Craft, 2002; John-Steiner, 2000).

Such examples suggest important parallels between the foundations for creativity and for learning: it has been suggested that creativity requires 'containment' in the more positive sense described by psychoanalysts such as Bion (1984), of holding overwhelming emotions such as distress so that they are seen as manageable, rather than containment in the more negative sense of enclosure and constriction. Psychoanalytic perspectives on the emotional dimensions of learning suggest that the capacity to 'hold doubt' must be an integral part of learning and of creativity (Salzburger-Wittenburg, 1983; Bibby, 2009); they also interpret 'not knowing' as what someone 'needs not to know' or 'cannot bear to know': something that may be profoundly challenging for both teacher and learner, but which is far removed from ignorance or stupidity (see Ellsworth, 1997).

The work of John-Steiner (2000) on 'creative collaboration' illustrates some current thinking about creativity and its possible contribution to significant educational experiences. Her eloquent accounts of a range of creative relationships posit the primacy of collaboration, mutuality and interdependence. She notes that creative work, like learning, involves being 'open to experimentation, prepared to face failure and willing to take criticism and suggestions from others' (op cit: 80). It can be open-ended and unpredictable; can pose challenges to one's sense of self and identity; and accordingly demands courage to endure transitional states of feeling one is no longer who one was, but not yet someone else – states that are full of possibility yet painfully inchoate.

Her study responds to the contexts and challenges of contemporary culture, in which new technologies enhance opportunities for collaboration but resources are finite and diminishing. She proposes new forms of interdependence, and 'dynamics of mutuality' to confront these, drawing on social models of cognition and creativity developed by Vygotsky and others and as lyrically encapsulated by Mikhail Bakhtin: 'I cannot do without the other; I cannot become myself without the other; I must find myself in the other, finding the other in me.' Such models theorize identity as social or as the 'self-in-relation', constructed and shaped by participation in the communities and cultures in which the individual lives. They suggest that learning and teaching involves adults and young people in relational processes that are not necessarily linear or rational. As John-Steiner highlights, they connect to feminist arguments conceiving of development as a process of growth and transformation taking place within 'communities of care' – that is, communities characterized by an ethic of responsibility rather than individualistic, autonomous viewpoints founded on an ethic of rights.

Here we might also point to recent interest in cultural geography perspectives across the social sciences, in which 'place' or 'space' (similarly to individuals) are not distinct and self-contained entities, but intertwined in and constituted by multiple other networks of times, places and everyday routines (Nespor, 1997; Leander, Phillips and Headrick-Taylor, 2010). For instance, Nespor's (1997) study of a US urban elementary school describes it as 'located and constituted at an intersection of community and city politics' and shows how flows of popular culture and commercialization were powerfully present in children's experiences of the social space of school.

One result of such theorizations has been to suggest that schools should draw more heavily on the human and non-human resources available within their own neighbourhoods – for instance,

Jeffrey and Woods (2003) advocate reaching out to parents and placing the school within the context of the wider community. These arguments offer a particular take on positions long held by critical and progressive pedagogues, that schools should break down boundaries with other (learning) sites to make new and meaningful connections between everyday lives, localities and learning, and should draw parents and other adults into schools, positioning them and young people as active creators of knowledge rather than passive receivers of information (Dewey, 1938; Gonzalez, Amanti and Moll, 2005). Such agentic relationships to curriculum and learning are claimed to increase well-being and confidence, which in turn promote greater competence and self-evaluative capacities (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003); and to encourage students to perceive learning as a lifelong endeavour. In turn this is presented as a necessary survival mechanism for young people in contexts of unstable employment and uncertain futures. Some commentators are particularly optimistic about the potential for participatory learning cultures to bring about broader social benefits: taking on responsibility for learning will have the virtuous ripple effect of helping young people develop a sense of social efficacy and understand their responsibilities of care to others in a wider context, both locally and globally. (Arthur and Davison, 2000; Thomson, 2007).

Studies of creative schools highlight environmental and aesthetic aspects of learning as important areas of concern, not as a passive backdrop to learning but as active constituents, shaping behaviours and engagement in learning, providing learning experiences in themselves, appreciating needs for different kinds of spaces in schools, such as for privacy, for exuberance or for quiet reflection (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003; Thomson et al, 2009). Craft (2005) argues that attention to space is not simply a means for engaging young people in learning but is part of the moral and ethical work of education in a world with increasingly scarce resources and constraints on spaces that young people can call their own.

B.5   Researching and identifying school ethos

Since most writers agree that ethos is composed of both tangible and intangible elements, some of its features will be publically available for analysis: symbols, rituals, ceremonies, officially endorsed statements about mission and vision in websites and prospectuses, the external and internal appearance of the school. Yet if ethos is viewed dynamically, as emerging from social interaction and process and as produced and reproduced over time, then research cannot take official ethos at face value, but needs to identify if and how it differs from the ethos generated by individuals and groups within a school (Donnelly, 2000, 2004). Here, however, descriptions of school ethos or culture as an 'unobservable force' (Prosser, 1999), an 'invisible essential' (Rooney, 2005) and as what is 'felt' rather than 'thought' (McLaughlin, 2005; Jeffrey and Woods, 2003) all pose problems for empirical research. How are we to observe that which cannot be seen? How far can an expression of feeling be contested or challenged? At what point can expressions of 'the subjective' be taken as describing ethos rather than idiosyncratic and individual ideas?

B.5.1   Survey instruments

The argument that ethos affects school performance emerged from the large quantitative samples and multilevel analytical techniques used by Rutter et al (1979) and subsequent researchers associated with SESI, which posited a relationship between internal school processes and the production of educational outcomes. As we noted above, the methodology and the findings have been intensely controversial. Nonetheless, it has also generated a plethora of quantitatively-oriented 'tools', survey instruments, publications and organizations claiming to enable senior managers to identify, measure and change a school's ethos or culture.

Surveys have the advantage of being able to generate comparative data across many settings, and several studies have shown how they can usefully highlight inconsistencies in perceptions of ethos

even within individual institutions. For instance, Solvason discusses how survey answers revealed differences between students and staff over effective disciplinary approaches or how frequently teachers praise student work (Solvason, 2005, and see the discussion of Kantarova 2009 on p.11 above).

The 'measures' that surveys use are necessarily limited and identify only a few elements of ethos (particularly if we recall the very expansive definitions of ethos that have been developed) – as we have already suggested in the section on climate on p.11 above. Cohen (2006) identifies four broad elements of school climate: safety, teaching and learning, relationships, and environment. The Californian School Climate Survey asks participants to respond on a continuum from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree' to statements such as the following:

- Adults really care about all students
- Adults believe that every student can be a success
- School fails to involve most parents in school events or activities

Any textbook on quantitative research will point to the challenges of using survey data. For example, response rates vary considerably, as can the relevance and representativeness of a sample; the sincerity and care of answers depends on many factors including whether completion is voluntary or enforced; even the most carefully constructed questions can be interpreted differently. A survey in which a majority of respondents rejected the first statement above, for example, would not in itself show whether the finding reflected scepticism about the genuineness of adult 'care', or a sense that only a few students were cared about. Yet the power of statistics is such that surveys are often taken to be authoritative and 'true'; in addition, if their purpose is to grab attention and generate headlines, there may be little interest in acknowledging their ambiguity.

However, surveys may be appropriately used where their limits are acknowledged and where the aim is to identify areas for more in-depth investigation. MacBeath's et al's work (1999), for example, may be more helpful than other tools not least because its wide-ranging indicators serve to support school self-evaluation rather than external agendas.

B.5.2   Qualitative research

Qualitative research is generally held to be stronger than quantitative research in exploring how complex, micro-educational, subtle processes affect pupils' experiences of education and their development of educational outcomes and wider benefits. In relation to policy formulation, it is said to be able to explore factors that help develop good practice. Although it inevitably focuses on only a few settings, accusations that it is 'unrepresentative' can be misplaced since the intention is to unravel the 'social' contained within the specific. Qualitative research is interpretivist in nature, grounded in a specific context and is concerned with how the social world is understood, interpreted, experienced, produced, or constituted. As Street (2003) suggests this allows the researcher to account for the fact that meanings are not produced in isolation but through involvement in social networks.

In relation to ethos, longer-term, ethnographic observation would seem better suited than surveys to permit 'seeing through the layers' of a school culture (Nind et al, 2004; Donnelly, 2000), identifying patterns of interaction (Hansen, 2002), 'in house' rules for 'getting on and getting by', and taken for granted assumptions about 'the way we do things around here'. Questions of perspective and interpretation are crucial in qualitative approaches, as Nind et al (ibid) argue: who is defining ethos, and from whose perspective? Since one cannot assume that the views of those occupying different positions within an institution necessarily align, it is important to gather

understandings 'from below' and different 'insider' accounts to compare, for instance, staff and students, or more specifically, senior management and junior or ancillary staff, male and female, high and low achieving students and so on. A literature on 'institutional ethnography' argues for beginning by examining the actualities of the lives of those involved in the institutional processes, and how these are embedded in social relations (Smith 2005). Texts play a key role here, e.g. Hamilton's institutional ethnography tracks an artefact (the Individual Learning Plan), as it circulates across the different sites of its production and use (Hamilton 2009).

Standard research approaches such as interviews may not be best suited to less articulate, younger or less literate participants. Some have argued that visual and creative methods are particularly useful in engaging children's voices in research (Clark, 2007) and even that young people more readily express their beliefs and emotions through creating images (Leitch and Mitchell, 2007), although such claims have also been interrogated critically (Bragg, 2011). Moreover, there are broader rationales for visual and creative methods: Prosser (2007) suggests that they assist in understanding the everyday realities of schools, and in making visible or even questioning taken-for-granted aspects of school culture, and Freedman (2003) argues that images elicit aesthetic and emotional responses as well as intellectual ones. They encourage attention not only to signs and symbols but also to the messages conveyed by bodies through where they are and what they are doing 'in place' (Scollon and Scollon, 2003). As a result a number of creative research methods have been trialled in educational research, including in studies of ethos. Photography is a particularly well-documented example, involving participant-generated images and / or the use of images as stimulus material (see Schratz and Steiner-Loffler, 1998 a, b; Thomson, 2008).

As we have noted, ethos is often understood to be 'naturalised' – that is, it becomes 'how things are around here' and is so 'taken for granted' as to be invisible to insiders, who accordingly find it hard to articulate what it involves. This suggests in turn that an outsider perspective, especially one enriched by familiarity with a wider range of institutions, might be necessary to uncover ethos. For instance, Osler (2006) refers to the everyday 'incivilities' which often go unchallenged in school cultures; whilst Arnot and Miles (2005) argue that hierarchical masculinities and 'laddishness' in schools have been amongst the unintended and unacknowledged consequences of New Labour's performativity agendas, which, by focusing on boys' underachievement, have marginalised feminist and egalitarian questions about social class and the underachievement of some girls.

These examples raise a further, crucial, aspect of ethos. The capacity to make such observations and to provide socially contextualized explanations for them is not innate, spontaneous or equally available to any witness. It derives from the sensitising and interpretive frameworks supplied – in these cases – by feminism, social justice and rights perspectives. Similarly, consider how a lesson might be experienced differently if one sits at the front alongside the teacher, or at the back amongst the 'naughty kids', and the motivations for choosing either location; or a staffroom culture dominated by a group of male teachers noisily joking and laughing together. Is the latter an example of collegiality that confirms cohesion and aligns perspectives or of a misogynist culture that actively excludes and intimidates female staff? – Even what researchers are able to notice and describe is shaped by their values and world view; representing in language a school, a person, a situation, does not capture an objective reality but is an interpretation derived implicitly or explicitly from theoretical orientation. In turn, a researcher's capacity to win audiences to their view depends in part on the persuasiveness – even creativity – with which they communicate it, and in part on how far those audiences already incline towards such ways of seeing. Different accounts of ethos are informed by different conceptual lenses, rather than (as is sometimes implied) the presence or absence of 'bias'.

As a result, a prime ethical responsibility for ethos researchers is to articulate explicitly what those values are. Our own approach draws on feminist, materialist and egalitarian discourses and concerns, which direct attention to the effects of policies and practices on different social groups and are critical of (for instance) accounts of schools as 'engines of social mobility' and/or individualist, 'victim-blaming' explanations of educational failure such as 'low aspirations', where these obscure the role of material inequalities. However, our analysis is also informed by Foucault's account of power, which shows that educational practices cannot easily be categorised as oppressive or liberating, but need to be analysed locally in terms of the capacities they install or the subjectivities they shape (Hunter 1994). Psychoanalytic perspectives on learning and on creativity also lead us to attend to the emotional and subjective dimensions of schooling practices.

B.6   Evaluating ethos

The section above suggests how ethos might be researched and named, but not how to compare and evaluate, how one might decide what makes one school 'ethos' better than another. There are obvious political and ethical dilemmas in doing so. When the DFES under the New Labour government defined a 'good school ethos', it did so in terms sufficiently vague and broad that almost any school might lay claim to it: 'consistent and shared values and standards, a curriculum that is delivered in a way that best supports every child so that all pupils are challenged and supported, pupils that are active partners both within learning and in the wider life of the school, parents who are recognised as partners and co-educators, taking an active role, a leadership that nurtures the talents and commitments of all stakeholders, an inclusive attitude in which the achievements, development and well-being of all members of the school community matter[1].

Other accounts adopt a 'technocratic' alibi, claiming that they are merely providing objective evidence of 'what works', rather than value judgements. For instance, a 2007 Conservative Party campaign *Comprehensively Excellent* argued that the following were elements of school ethos common to successful comprehensives: strict school uniform policies, extensive extra-curricular activities, longer lunch breaks, systems of prefects and a head boy/girl, and public reward for achievement, 'both academic and sporting' (Conservative Party, 2007). Mossbourne Academy in Hackney is frequently referenced as an exemplar of such a desirable ethos. Yet such 'findings' diverge from others that also claim an evidence basis. For instance, the Scottish Schools Ethos Network's proposals for factors contributing to a 'positive' ethos include: interpersonal relationships, emotional awareness and communication; leadership, participation and responsiveness (across the school community); positive approaches to behaviour; physical factors such as the school environment; valuing and enabling diversity in community members and in achievements (Ethos Network, 2005). Meanwhile the popular *Excellence and Enjoyment* primary document (DfES, 2003) claims that 'in learning environments where the ethos supports learning: there is an expectation on the part of both adults and children that learning is important and enjoyable, and that everyone can achieve; teaching uses a range of approaches and there is a culture of collaborative learning; teachers and practitioners are ambitious for children and expectations of learning are high; children are motivated to be "the best that I can be".' (DfES, 2003) There is relatively little overlap between these accounts and *Comprehensively Excellent*. Of course, it is not entirely clear how one might verify claims about 'emotional awareness and communication'; but one might equally argue that school success is more closely related to intake than is often acknowledged (Gorard, 2010), or point to other successful comprehensives that eschew some or all of the elements listed in *Comprehensively Excellent* (Northen, 2011; Brunsma, 2006). How far one is prepared to tolerate levels of imprecision, weaknesses or particular rhetorical flourishes, that is, may rely more on prior political sympathies than is often admitted.

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[1] See http://www.supportingselfevaluation.org.uk/training/d4/school_ethos/school04_020.html downloaded 05/03/2010

If, as we would argue, the school can be seen as a microcosm for society and the concept of ethos as a means to imagine its ideal organization, then it is entirely legitimate to ask about the values embedded in any accounts of ethos. Even if analysis reveals tendencies by all sides in these debates towards hyberbole and wish-fulfilment, deciding where one stands remains a critical task. A 'traditional' or grammar-school ethos, for instance, could be seen as prioritising order and hierarchy. A strict uniform policy provides a metonym for 'good' citizenship and adherence to the rule of established law more generally; the prefect system, streaming and other devices for ranking and differentiating students affirm as inevitable the unequal distribution of power and prestige beyond the school gates; team sports and dividing students into rival 'houses' imply that competition is both natural and motivating. Requiring students to stand when an (adult) visitor enters the classroom might be seen as ingraining physical habits of collective deference to authority; it also underscores the gulf that is seen to exist between teachers (or adults), who are 'individuated' entities, and students, who are a 'mass' and must conduct themselves as such; in many accounts, the interests of these two groups are seen as opposed.

On the other hand, more liberal or progressive educational perspectives on ethos would claim to prioritise democratic and egalitarian values. 'Student voice' practices (school councils, student representatives on multiple school bodies, student control of particular activities, student surveys and consultations) can be seen as attempting to listen to students and give them significant roles; mixed ability teaching as valuing diversity and inclusion, resisting notions of innate capacities; student-centred teaching as promoting collaborative relationships between staff and students, and mutual rather than differentiated identities; collectively-produced or restorative and therapeutic discipline codes as expressing faith in the capacities of young people to organize and manage themselves, and so on (see e.g. Dyson et al 2002; Ethos Network, 2005; Munn, 2002).

Our research suggests that 'creative school ethos' has more in common with the inclusive, positive and participatory values of liberal or progressive education, whilst also extending them in important respects. But equally, we would stress that what is involved in the 'ethos debate' is not a morally equivalent choice between equally effective practices, but profoundly divergent visions of the individual, the group, of learning and of the good society – visions that set order and hierarchy against participation and collaboration; prescribed, binary roles against fluid and shifting identities; fencing-in against reaching out; differentiation and taxonomy against egalitarian multiplicity and diversity; learners as minds alone, or learners as embodied; learning as mastery and as linear journey to a predetermined end point, or learning as a risky encounter, not least with the self, that perhaps begins only when one strays from the path. The stakes, that is, are high indeed.

Section C: The Research

C.1   Creative Partnerships and the origins of the ethos research

This report was commissioned by the national organisation Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) which runs the 'flagship creative learning programme', Creative Partnerships. Creativity, Culture and Education (CCE) 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. It describes itself as having 'a vision for children's creativity to be encouraged and nurtured in and out of school. We believe all children should experience and access the diverse range of arts and cultural activity in England because these opportunities can enhance their aspirations, achievements and skills'[2].

Creative Partnerships was established in 2002 and aims to foster long-term partnerships between schools and creative professionals to 'inspire, open minds and harness the potential of creative learning' (www.creativepartnerships.com). The programme has worked with just over 1 million children, and over 90,000 teachers in more than 8,000 projects in England. A significant feature of its work has been its support for a substantial body of critical research and analysis addressing both its programmes and key themes in current thinking about creativity, the arts, education, school change, student participation and culture (for instance in its series of Literature Reviews). According to one of these research projects, Creative Partnerships has since its inception tackled the dual challenge of encouraging cultural shifts in educational institutions towards creativity and innovation whilst also responding to the standards agenda (Jones and Thomson, 2008). It has been charged from its inception with promoting social and educational inclusion and it works primarily, although not exclusively, in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

In 2008, Creative Partnerships commissioned research to 'evaluate the nature and impact of its programmes on school ethos'. This project took place over 18 months between June 2009 and December 2010: the distinct stages of the research process are presented in the project timeline in the appendix of this report. Previous research had pointed to school ethos as an area where Creative Partnerships programmes had been able to effect change in schools (Thomson et al, 2009). In addition, many of those involved in its work in schools – teachers, students, creative practitioners, Creative Agents - had repeatedly argued that an important outcome related to improving relationships between staff and students, enhancing motivation to learn, boosting the reputation of the school in the local community, and so on – all, clearly, issues relevant to ethos. Yet, often specifically because of schools' location in disadvantaged areas – such as a rapid turnover of students in a transient population – the good work achieved in such respects, was not valued or recognized because it did not translate into increased attainment and SATs scores.

The authors Bragg and Manchester had previously worked on the research and report *Youth Voice in the work of Creative Partnerships* (Bragg, Manchester and Faulkner, 2008). The project was supported by two consultants: Professor Pat Thomson, who had directed a major research project into Creative Partnerships and school change (Thomson et al, 2009) and Professor Keri Facer.

C.2   Ethos - a summary

It may be helpful at this point not only to summarise our understanding of ethos, but to indicate where our particular emphasis falls (in contrast to definitions given by others) and what priorities it suggests for research. Our review of the literature suggested that:

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[2] http://www.creativitycultureeducation.org/about-us/ 12/04/2011

- Ethos unavoidably embodies **values** and a **vision of society** – even in 'describing' a school's ethos an observer or researcher draws on particular interpretive and evaluative frameworks; these may be more or less explicit, but they cannot be neutral or absent.
- Ethos is both **official** and **unofficial** – that is, it cannot be read off from the versions made available by school management, and a range of perspectives on it should be sought, including 'from below';
- Ethos emerges from **everyday** processes of **relationships** and **interactions** and it concerns **norms** rather than exceptions; research benefits from extended immersion in schools to grasp these shared, mundane experiences;
- Ethos is in some respects intangible, to do with the '**feel**' of a school, with that which is experienced but, since it is also **taken for granted**, may **not easily** be **articulated**. Thus accounts given by insiders may need to be supplemented by critical analysis from external observers;
- Ethos also, however, emerges from **material** and **social** aspects of the **environment**; research should take these into account rather than assuming that the intangible nature of ethos makes them irrelevant;
- Ethos is **continually negotiated** by those within the school rather than simply imposed once and for all; members of school communities are active agents in defining and redefining ethos.

C.3   Outline of the research: approaches and methods

Our understanding of ethos as we have outlined it above suggested that detailed qualitative work was necessary to go beyond explicit statements of intention. We therefore opted to work in a small number of schools that were considered by Creative Partnerships staff, by the schools themselves and by our consultants to provide examples of excellent or interesting practice in terms of creative school ethos. In this way we hoped we would be able to gain an in-depth understanding of the potential of creative approaches to ethos. We worked throughout an entire school year (2009-2010), in order to map the cycle of the year, collect detailed data sets and produce rich and nuanced contextual understandings informed by the significant time spent in these sites. Qualitative research requires social as well as intellectual skills, in order to gain access to particular sites, to make and retain relationships, and to negotiate sense and understanding (Scott and Russell, 2005). The relatively long time scales of the research allowed the researcher (Manchester) to develop relationships of trust with staff, creative practitioners and students in the schools. We involved school personnel and creative practitioners as much as possible, discussing ethical concerns with them, being sensitive to their needs and sharing findings. Methods of data collection were also discussed with them in order to ensure they were seen as appropriate, useful and relevant.

We supplemented these studies with previous research into Creative Partnerships schools, conducted by ourselves and by a range of others including Professor Thomson, who as mentioned above was a consultant on the Project. Our analytical and theoretical perspectives, and our familiarity with a wider range of institutions, helped us to identify the unspoken and tacit, and to compare with practice elsewhere.

Our initial desk research and literature review fed into the design of a conceptual framework for the studies, which identified four key areas of school ethos:

1) the common-sense understandings held by people in the school,
2) the social relationships and rules that govern organisational structures and personal interactions,
3) the values of the people in the school,
4) the physical and material organisation of the school.

Under each of these we drew up a list of possible indicators to explore in our case study sites: and which informed the production of a 'case study toolkit' which specified our units of analysis, research methods, data to be collected and a draft observation framework which included a list of questions to ask ourselves and others when in schools.

We collected overt and official expressions of school ethos: for instance, in texts such as prospectuses and newsletters, and in photographs and notes on school entrances and assemblies. We also sought out understandings 'from below' and different 'insider' accounts, using creative and visual methods in addition to more conventional social science approaches. Key creative practitioners, managers and teachers were generally interviewed separately; a number of focus groups sought out the perceptions of students and of particular groups of staff. Most events and observations were digitally audio-recorded where appropriate and not intrusive, and the researcher made handwritten notes as well. Whilst more formal interviews were transcribed, the recordings otherwise served as an aide-memoire when writing up detailed notes of observations.

The studies followed the school year, and thus began by observing how new members (both staff and students) were inducted into the school community, and the atmosphere in initial assemblies and staff meetings (particularly those that related to creative learning projects). Over the course of the year we were also able to follow cycles of particular creative learning projects through the stages of planning, implementing and evaluating; we worked closely with creative practitioners, teachers and young people in order to understand their experiences and involvement.

By the mid-point of the school year (March 2010), an interim report including narratives about the individual sites and first analyses of their distinctive ethos was shared with the schools as well as with Creative Partnerships and our consultants, to encourage further reflection and discussion. Concentrating on developing detailed studies of a small number of schools, combined with our analytical approach to the research, certainly enabled us to recognize commonalities and differences across sites. Following two terms of fieldwork, and some more rigourous literature review work we returned to the conceptual framework and made some quite substantial changes to it. The revised framework and indicators were then taken back into our case study schools where the researcher conducted focus group sessions with staff and pupils to assess their responses to it.

C.4   Introduction to the research sites

The five schools selected for in-depth study - all of which have been anonymised and given pseudonyms in this report - were all located in disadvantaged, urban areas and represented practice across sectors (secondary, primary, special and nursery school). Three out of the five sites were designated Creative Partnerships Schools of Creativity – that is, they 'display outstanding practice' in creative teaching and learning, and are committed to outreach with other schools locally and nationally (www.creative-partnerships.com/about/schools-of-creativity/). Practical considerations such as distance from the researcher's home town, enthusiasm of the school personnel for involvement and personal relationships already established between the researcher and the schools were also considered when decisions were made.

Staff at **Lange nursery school** (a School of Creativity) draw on early years methods and theories and engage in a continual process of reflective practice that enables them to adopt a distinctive method of working with the children in their school that draws on creativity as a resource to support learning. An artist in residence works three days a week at the school and is also a member of the school's governing body.

Delaunay primary school is a small school with a multicultural intake and is also a School of Creativity. It was familiar to the research team through its involvement in the *Creative*

Partnerships and Youth Voice research project, as noted above. Personnel at the school were very open and interested in research and senior managers were able to describe their creative journey and the differences that they felt creativity and creative learning had made in their school and particularly on the school's ethos. Three resident artists work part-time at Delaunay, demonstrating senior manager's commitment to creative learning.

The last of the three Schools of Creativity was **Sherman secondary school**, which was atypical of schools involved with the Creative Partnerships programme in that it is a relatively small Catholic secondary school with a more 'middle class', largely white intake. This school provided a useful point of comparison, both in relation to the influence of faith in this context and in relation to its intake.

Matisse special school had worked with Creative Partnerships for four years and although unsuccessful in their bid to become a School of Creativity came highly recommended by the local organisation responsible for delivering Creative Partnerships in that area, where it was felt that it epitomized what they would identify as a 'creative' school ethos.

Finally, **Warhol secondary school** was at an earlier stage of development as a 'creative' school – in their second year as a Change School. Change Schools are 'supported by Creative Partnerships for three years to bring about significant changes in their ethos, ambition and achievement'. Its inclusion enabled some observation of a process of school (ethos) change, whilst being at the early stages of the programme it also provided a useful point of comparison to the other schools in our sample. Warhol school is located in largely Muslim area with an intake of Pakistani, Bengali and Somali pupils. The school faced a number of challenges including high staff turnover and welfare issues.

The table below summarises details of the sites: the appendices also contain more detailed accounts, including of the most significant aspects of their work that we include in section D.

School	Context	Creative approaches	Creative Partnerships programme
Lange Nursery Inner city estate nursery school co-located with a Children's Centre (ages 3-4) - 'outstanding' OFSTED	Transient, minority ethnic population Stable staff NOR[3]: 71	Long term, day to day relationships with creative practitioners (including an artist in residence) Reggio and Forest school approaches taken on as appropriate. Projects focusing on environmental change and development of the school.	School of Creativity 5 years work Resident artist also on governing body Creative Partnerships cluster leader
Delaunay Primary Inner city nursery and primary school (ages 3-11). Global linking project with Pakistan and Lebanon - 'outstanding' OFSTED	Transient minority ethnic population, plus children more settled in the local area. Stable staff. NOR: 230	Two artists in residence. Reggio and Forest School approaches in early years. Creativity related to global citizenship and the school's international linking projects with Pakistan and Lebanon.	School of Creativity 6 years work School creative agent/ resident artist key partner at school. Creative Partnerships cluster leader
Matisse School Special high school (ages 11-18). Specialist in cognition and learning. Co-located with a mainstream high school in a newly built 'education village'. 'Outstanding' OFSTED	Stable staff Very diverse student body with a range of needs NOR: 100	Long term work with creative practitioners, focused on/ in a multimedia suite. Creativity linked with wider inclusion, multimedia approaches and music technology	No affiliation. 3 years funded work. Not awarded School of Creativity status but continues to work with creatives
Sherman Secondary School Catholic Technology and applied learning college (ages 11-16) Outstanding OFSTED	Stable staff Over subscribed, popular school Good discipline NOR: 728	Creative Partnerships co-ordinator central to the work. Some big projects with local arts organizations, and smaller-scale collaborations between creative practitioners and individual teachers, designing new teaching and learning strategies or schemes of work	School of Creativity 3 years work New creative agent Work with feeder primaries
Warhol School Inner city secondary School, specialist humanities college (ages 11-16) 'Outstanding' Ofsted received towards the end of our research period	98% muslim population, high staff turnover. Recent substantial improvement in exam results. NOR: 825	Creative Partnerships co-ordinator works closely with a Creative Agent. Creative practitioners work with a student 'youth panel' who are 'creative leaders' in school, and with selected teachers. Various environmental projects including graffiti murals, and a 'global garden' area designed by an artist working with teachers.	Change School 2 years work 'Youth panel' present at local events etc

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[3] NOR: Number on roll

C.5   More information about methods

The methods employed in the research corresponded with our understanding of the key dimensions of ethos; they also reflected our broad interdisciplinary background and interests in cultural and media studies, social semiotics, educational sociology and cultural geography. We also came to appreciate that the visual and creative methods we used were particularly well suited to researching Creative Partnerships programmes in schools: creative projects often foreground the visual, auditory, representational aspects of school culture, and adopt multiple methods of engagement, beyond traditional word/ number based approaches.
The use of visual technologies – still and moving digital photography - enabled us to play back key moments for reflection by research participants and to share aspects of practice in the research team.

Many of these methods we employed might also be useful for others wishing to consider questions of school ethos and values: we outline some of them in detail and indicate some of the insights they yielded.

Cultural inventories/'mapping' – researchers observed spaces (in particular non-teaching spaces) in the school, making diagrams of where artifacts/objects and people were positioned in relation to one another and analysing 'found' images in displays etc in relation to their context. For instance, we noted the prominence of the Creative Partnerships logo and general 'creativity' branding throughout the school; in staffrooms we noted whether washing up was completed and by whom. At Delaunay primary school, a display in a public, high profile area in the school (the central hall) included posters created that year by all classes addressing the question, 'What kind of world would you like to live in?' Each class had presented their ideas in different ways using visual and written techniques, including, for instance, the handprints of every member of the class, images of flowers, rainbows and butterflies, combined with words such as 'freedom, no racism, no poverty, a world of peace, no guns, no abuse…'. In conjunction with a display board in the entrance hall showing a war scene painted by a child from their partner school in the Lebanon to suggest some important features of this school's ethos in addressing potentially painful or difficult areas of life.

Shadowing students – we followed individual students throughout a school day to gain an insight into their experiences, including, for instance, the distances that students had to walk between lessons or the time that they had for lunch and relaxation.

Student tours – this involved *'walk and talk'* methods where the researcher asked young people to conduct a tour of the school for and with them. The students were given cameras and asked to take photographs on the way, and conversations were recorded as evidence of their reactions and thoughts as we walked. This helped to identify areas that students valued, such as the library at Warhol which was a quiet, colourful space away from the intensity of life in the rest of the school.

Metaphorical thinking - a metaphorical thinking exercise in which we asked 'If your school were an animal, what kind of animal would it be?' elicited young people's and teacher responses to their schools. Metaphorical thinking exercises can support participants to think through complex aspects of their experience, perhaps encouraging them to go beyond the taken for granted, and hold concepts of similarity and difference in tension. At Warhol one student suggested that their school was like a poodle, hinting at its preoccupation with appearance – literally, since teachers were required to enforce uniform policy before and after every lesson, and in terms of results and league tables. At Sherman one young respondent likened his school to a tortoise, suggesting its steady but purposeful pace and a degree of protection from the 'slings and arrows' of perpetual policy innovations.

Photo voice – During our focus group work with young people we asked them to take six photos of their school representing various aspects of ethos. This exercise enabled us to identify what matters in their experience: students at Warhol School brought back photos of a 'smelly' corridor that they all disliked and dirt in the hall where they had PE lessons, as well as photos of murals and quiet areas in the school that they valued, conveying the significance of their multisensory experiences of school.

Bubble dialogue templates (based on Wall and Higgins, 2006) – we designed a template using a cartoon structure, involving simple line drawings, and empty speech and thought bubbles (to elicit student views of what a creative/ positive environment might feel like. These templates were designed to support students in communicating unarticulated emotions in relation to their schools and creativity. For example, at Matisse School students demonstrated the reciprocal nature of relationships between adults and young people at their school, whilst the templates at Warhol expressed pessimism about students being trusted to behave properly that made it difficult for teachers to adopt creative methods.

Researcher observations and analysis - the researcher attended at least three sessions of a creative project, at the beginning, the middle and one of the final sessions of the project. Researcher fieldnotes were produced as well as video footage of sessions, photographs and a collection of quotes and reflections from Creative Practitioners, teachers and young people. In some cases the data was shared with staff and/or students. For instance, sharing fieldnotes with an artist at Delaunay enabled him to gain an 'outsiders' view of his own practice in order to highlight his methods of working with young people and the relationship between this and the school's ethos.

Creative Practitioner journals and sketchbooks – these artifacts provided an insight into the working processes and reflective practices employed by creative practitioners as they developed a creative learning project. They were used to stimulate discussion and reflection each time the researcher was able to visit the site. At Delaunay primary school the Creative Practitioner recorded his thoughts in a journal that he shared with the researcher, enabling us to unpick together the challenges the children (and creative practitioners) had encountered during the project.

Student journals and work - in some projects Creative Practitioners and teachers asked students to use learning journals in order to record their thoughts, expectations and responses to the creative project work they were involved in. For example in one project at Sherman school journals provided a student perspective on their own engagement in the creative project as they recorded their thoughts using poetry, photography, drawing and collage work.

Creative Partnership and other evaluation and documentation data - Creative Partnerships builds evaluation and reflection into projects, requiring beginning, midpoint and endpoint conversations with young people, practitioners and teachers. Where possible we observed these and collected the data submitted to Creative Partnerships. In some cases additional documentation was produced, which we also collected (for example the practitioner and student journals described above).

C. 6   Dilemmas of evaluation

It would be an oversimplification to claim that Creative Partnerships programme had a definitive impact on a school's ethos, for a number of reasons. Firstly, the Creative Partnerships programme would inevitably be only one amongst many policy initiatives and political, cultural, social, pedagogical, demographic trends to which schools are responding simultaneously. It would be intellectually dishonest to claim a decisive causal role for any single one of these, although we appreciate that others are sometimes less scrupulous in this respect, particularly when future

funding is at stake. Secondly, the limited time span of the research made it difficult to capture the slow and uneven processes of school change, especially at such a broad level as ethos. We were however able to compensate for this in some ways through drawing on the insights of our consultant Professor Thomson, who had by that stage followed some settings over a long period of time. Thirdly, most of the schools involved directly in the project had longstanding reputations for good practice, which suggested that they had established a positive school ethos before the advent of Creative Partnerships. Key practitioners at these sites also claimed to have espoused creativity prior to their involvement with Creative Partnerships; they represented the Creative Partnerships programme as an ally or catalyst, resonating with values, ideas and beliefs to which they were already committed and offering opportunities to develop, elaborate and extend them. It would be difficult therefore to claim that Creative Partnerships had been a transformative element that had brought radically different perspectives to practice, although it was sometimes argued it had played this role for other staff members less familiar with creative approaches.

In what follows, therefore, we do not imply that Creative Partnerships alone is responsible for the good practice we describe, and we recognize that other schools may be adopting similar strategies without the support of Creative Partnerships. Instead, we attempt to identify the *additionality* of the Creative Partnerships programme – how it enhanced practice and helped it develop in ways it might not otherwise have done – and to point to particular spaces where its contribution might be most strongly felt.

Section D: Findings: creative school ethos

D.1   Elements of creative school ethos

In this section we discuss what we see as some key dimensions of creative school ethos, providing examples from the research to illustrate our arguments. As noted earlier, there is some overlap with features of 'positive' and 'inclusive' school cultures; sometimes we identify issues that appear to be uncontroversial and common concerns for schools. But, as we hope to show, there are intricate and necessary relationships between different elements; and even apparently minor variations in practice can mark important differences in values and in potential impact. Some aspects of good practice are already recognized as such, and are likely to be found in a wider range of schools than those where Creative Partnerships works; they contribute to the 'fertile soil' where Creative Partnerships programmes might take root. Then, we explain how the kinds of approach promoted by Creative Partnerships and the particular practices it enabled might provide support, reinforcement and additionality to creative school ethos.

Our arguments are made under three single-word headings: considerate, convivial and capacious. We do not, however, claim that these 'capture' creative ethos and reflect its 'reality' more exactly, finely or comprehensively than other terms. Rather, they respond to the perhaps unresolvable dilemmas of attempting to capture something as insubstantial yet complex as ethos in language. Individual words can suffer or benefit from the weight of accumulated usage, may prove resistant to re-interpretation or inseparable from connotations one might hope to discard; and however carefully writers might frame and define the meanings they wish to assign to them, they cannot exclude the interpretations readers bring. 'Respect', for example, was one term that we considered significant for our arguments but eventually rejected on the grounds that we could not sever it from associations with more authoritarian versions in educational debates (respect as that which students must automatically give to teachers) or street usage. We rejected some other terms – safety, recognition, inclusion - that we felt were insufficiently specific or unable to distinguish the practice we observed from what many other schools would claim to be doing.

We therefore inflect these chosen terms in quite specific ways that we discuss at the start of each subsection here, in order to enable exploration of aspects of practice we see as significant. They have served us as 'crystallizations', to draw on Laurel Richardson's metaphor for research; that is, as a way to discuss issues from different angles, appreciating that they are multi-dimensional and complex, and that one's perspective is inevitably partial (Richardson, 1998). We hope that they will open conversation, discussion, debate, reflection and dissent with and amongst readers about significant aspects of practice, rather than about the virtues or inadequacies of a particular vocabulary.

D.2   Considerate

recognition
reflective practice
considering others
chorus of voices
inclusive discipline a affiliation
respecting distinct identities
transparent decision making
providing for
courtesy fairness of trust range interests

D.2.1   The dimensions of a considerate school ethos

By the idea of being 'considerate', we refer partly to appropriate kinds of care, discipline and relationships in school, preferring 'considerate' over 'respectful' in order to emphasize the importance of mutual, reciprocal civility. We also refer to providing safety and intelligibility: a moot point is whether these are enough in themselves for creativity or are amongst its prerequisites. Being considerate might feature in definitions of inclusive culture, but it is stronger than 'tolerance'. Thus it stresses more strongly the need to respect students' cultures and life experiences (which are often very different – and tougher – than teachers', especially in disadvantaged areas). Rather than requiring that they be suppressed or supplanted, these are conceived as a potentially positive contribution to their learning or to a creative process. Being considerate implies that students matter and feel they matter – and not only to the extent that they submit to the ethos of the school as defined by others – are taken into account and can account for themselves.

Thus being considerate includes the following elements.

1. Courtesy towards others, civility; being thoughtful, showing concern for the feelings, well-being and circumstances of others, such that – for instance – the environment reflects the care that 'the school' has for its members.

2. Feeling that one matters or is considered, that community membership is a right rather than something that must be earned; the cycle set in motion in response to this, ie, considering others in return, trusting others and developing a sense of affiliation and belonging to a diverse collective.

3. Fairness and recognition, a 'taking into account': for instance, in the use of resources, a sense that all groups in school are considered when decisions are made, being transparent; discipline policies that are inclusive and flexible rather than punitive, that take into account that different young people need different kinds of support, whilst also being consistent and fair.

4. Consideration as having regard for, respecting students' distinct identity and differences, thus being inclusive and providing for a range of interests and needs.

5. Considering, being thoughtful; for staff, engaging in reflective practice and ongoing cycles of thinking, planning, evaluating and responding to students. This element includes a capacity to critique practice.

6. Being considerate takes *into* account our need *to account* for ourselves, to have a reasonably coherent and positive narrative about the institution of which we are a part.

D.2.2 Considerate schools

Considerate schools provide safe environments where care is shown for the well-being of their staff and students. Caring is conveyed through human interactions and relationships, in consistent expectations of behaviour, or as it is commonly put, in 'good' discipline. Educationalists of all persuasions generally agree that good discipline is better promoted through positive, co-operative approaches establishing mutually agreed and understood behaviour codes, than through punitive and negative strategies. Yet it is a mark of how often schools fail to achieve some very basic standards in this respect that during our research in Sherman school we were struck by how rarely we heard raised voices – as we had in many other schools - and by the norm of courteous modes of address between adults and young people. Students remarked that boundaries were clear, so that they could 'know where the line is'. Alongside this approach to discipline, a strong support system provided, for instance, friendship and bereavement groups where, according to the head teacher, young people were 'encouraged to be mutually supportive of each other.'

Consistency in discipline does not, by itself, preclude strict hierarchies: a well-disciplined school could also be highly authoritarian, since consistency only demands that patterns of subordination do not vary. Being considerate towards others as we interpret it however concerns acts of civility and care extended to others regardless of status; thus routine but symbolic courtesies such as holding a door open were as likely to be performed by senior teachers for students as the other way around, depending on need or circumstance, but 'traditional' forms of deference, such as standing up for an adult, were less in evidence. At Sherman senior managers described this as 'an ethos of mutual respect and treating people with dignity.'

Schools differ in how far they look beyond their basic legal responsibility (to ensure a physically safe environment) to be considerate in the sense of catering for bodily and emotional needs: for instance, needs for sufficient structure, reliability, intelligibility and consistency to provide security; for rest, for stimulation; needs for a suitable environment, one that is manageable rather than overwhelming. Students in our case study schools – echoing the findings of other research - consistently interpreted their environment as an active and personal communication about their value. Areas that were colourful, clean or appropriate signified that they were cared for, that they were being taken into account; but those that were dirty or smelly (typically, student-dominated areas such as particular corridors and toilets) marked the opposite.

Structure, reliability and consistency may not be enough in themselves but they may be the building blocks for a creative ethos, enabling everyone in a school to feel more comfortable to experiment, try new things, and make and learn from mistakes. At Lange nursery, for instance the day had a clear structure and regular – natural - rhythm. The three and four year olds attending the nursery quickly learnt the meanings of certain signals; for instance the ringing of a small hand bell at the end of a free play session indicated it was time to sit down with their 'family' groups. Understanding this pattern meant children were happier to participate in some quieter or more sedentary sessions, knowing that for the majority of the day they would have plenty of opportunities to play more exuberantly. The degree of attention given to bodily and emotional

needs was striking, particularly in contrast to secondary contexts that ignore them. For instance, the pattern of the day was also logical; lunch was preceded by group time and massage, during which the intensity of earlier playing (and potential disputes) could recede. During massage time, calming music played, and the children - sitting in family groups – would each first ask permission and then massage another.

'Safety' or security also involves a familiar physical and emotional geography. A Year 11 male student at Sherman described students 'always feel[ing] we can go to somebody' with problems or concerns. Many young people at Sherman could name a favourite place in the school, most often 'the yard', a place where they felt they could 'socialise with friends', rest, relax and take time for themselves in an otherwise busy school day. At Delaunay primary children described the mutual help available from other children and staff at lunch or breaktimes: 'cause if you fall over in the playground someone will actually come and pick you up and take you to a teacher'. At Lange nursery special attention was paid to moments of arrival and departure; key staff were always available to greet children and their parents. Practitioners often engaged in discussion with parents at this time, recognizing and easing the often difficult transitions between home and school.

Consideration suggests that no one is seen as being of lesser importance; that community membership is bestowed on those within an institution as a right (rather than being earned, although it might in theory be taken away if abused); it invites affiliation based on mutual interdependence and mattering. The deputy head at Delaunay suggested that when new children arrived (which, in an area with a transient population, they did frequently throughout the school year) they settled in quickly as they were buddied up with other children who were generally 'warm and want to help', but in addition staff and other children provided 'time for quietness, for them to bond, get to know others and to find things out.' The deputy head at Sherman suggested students 'feel safe [to ask questions and criticize] because they know what they do is valued,' the head teacher adding that students are all 'valued for who they are.' That this was not compulsory flag-saluting or tribal loyalty was shown in part when students in both settings offered balanced but significant criticisms of the school.

Transparent decision-making takes into account and makes visible the opinions of all involved in the school community. For instance, the head-teacher and senior managers at Lange nursery had come to believe that children should use staff forenames - a change from established practice in the school. Instead of simply announcing this, senior managers first opened up a discussion with staff in a whole school INSET – finding that staff weren't comfortable with this change at all. They then conducted a face-to-face consultation with parents who largely agreed with staff. The decision was therefore made that bringing in this change at this time could be counter-productive.

A school's overall provision can convey consideration, in that offering a wide range of activities - even if only in extra-curricular provision rather than in the mainstream curriculum - caters for different interests and capabilities. Being considerate therefore involves 'permitting' young people to be or become someone else, someone other than how they have hitherto been perceived, rather than limiting the identities available to young people (Wexler, 1992). Our research schools consciously tried to make it possible for students to take on roles against gender or age expectation – such as boys joining textile or dance projects and students replacing adults as camera operators for official events or the treasurer in a cross-generation committee. A year 11 boy at Sherman commented that the wider range of activities on offer, including sport clubs, a large number of different arts based activities and community action endeavours, increased the spaces within which young people could express themselves, in a variety of forms.

Regard for others could be expressed through representational recognition. For instance, at Delaunay primary the school entrance, a symbolically important area, prominently displayed photos of children, linked to a world map showing their countries of origin. At Lange photos of

children's families were displayed throughout the nursery at a height where children and adults could easily see them. In both cases children and their everyday lives and cultures at home were placed in positions of importance.

Being considerate in the sense of constantly reflecting on and considering practice was also a priority in our case study schools. Lange nursery set time aside at the end of every school day for informal, ongoing reflections on their practice, in addition to the staff meeting that was held one afternoon a week. At these meetings staff discussed individual children, group dynamics, activities and the nursery environment. Ideas and experiences were also constantly swapped during the school day and in breaks and over lunch and when we observed a staff meeting we noted that every single member of staff contributed ideas, suggesting they all felt they had something to offer that was of value and appreciated. In another primary school we observed a staff meeting where staff were encouraged to discuss their successes through a 'something good to share' slot each week. Photographs and other artefacts from these moments of practice were then communicated with the wider school community through a noticeboard to which anyone could contribute.

D.2.3 Creative Partnerships and 'considerate' school ethos

- Creative Partnerships has a particular commitment to youth voice, which has helped make student views more central to school processes, and involved young people in contexts and situations where they are treated with different kinds of courtesy and 'trusted', for instance to make decisions previously seen as beyond them. New documentation that Creative Partnerships introduced in 2008 stressed that schools should include young people in positions of governance, in planning and evaluating personalized learning and in relation to school environment and resources. Both in this research project and in our previous research for Creative Partnerships we found many of these schools were involving young people in curriculum development and delivery; giving them a role in 'staff learning and development'; and conceiving 'environment and resources' in imaginative ways that promoted discussion of learning spaces.

- A striking example of what can result from consideration occurred when we visited Delaunay to run a focus group. Whilst a staff member showed us to the room designated for us, the visit was otherwise entirely managed by the children, whose first thoughts were to offer us refreshments and check that our seats were comfortable. Their gestures conveyed a substantive sense of affiliation to the school, that their belonging within it bestowed both the duty and the right to take charge, to welcome and to take care, even of adults in relation to whom children are more normally positioned as recipients of care. Their actions replayed the civility that they had been shown by staff: for instance if they came to meetings in the staff room they routinely received the kinds of solicitude and hospitality they then offered us. Indeed, it is possible that they could not have acted towards us in this way had they not. At the same time, during the focus group they aired several (apparently reasonable) criticisms of school practices suggesting both that they understood how to offer perspectives that would be listened to, and that they did not feel a need to 'sell' the school to outsiders.

- Creative practitioners and creative approaches could substantially influence the material environment of a school and therefore how far students felt 'cared for' and considered. Students at Sherman and Warhol School commented appreciatively on efforts to improve the environment, for instance where artists had designed murals to distinguish between different subject areas or to decorate the toilets, or where artists had worked with young people to create a sculpture, a new garden area or a mosaic in outside areas. Young people claimed that such work 'affected their mood', and felt that it provided evidence that they were valued and that their needs and requirements were appreciated and being met.

- The additional funding that Creative Partnerships provides for schools meant that projects often involved working in smaller groups, with concentrated periods of time given over to projects, and less need to adhere to curriculum and teach for examinations. Creative practitioners could thus offer the kinds of reciprocal, inclusive relationships that are harder to achieve, particularly in secondary schools, where creative practitioners were freer to engage with young people's own concerns, experiences and interests. Some schools designed 'special attention' projects to prevent particular members of the school feeling overlooked: for instance, one secondary school sought out 'invisible' students – those who neither excelled nor misbehaved spectacularly – recognizing that they were often overlooked.

- In some cases, Creative Partnerships funding supported specific student groups to gain in confidence, challenge presumptions and demand they be considered. For instance, in one setting, a group of students with disabilities were trained up to manage and use visual and audio equipment, thereby becoming the first port of call and an essential resource for anyone wanting to record school events or projects.

- Similarly, Matisse staff commented that one benefit of working in partnership with professional creative practitioners was that they enabled their students to produce work for display in public arenas – a contribution to ensuring young people with disabilities were considered, taken into account, mattered.

- Creative Partnerships' work brings outside professionals into school whose own working culture may be at odds with the school's - particularly schools that aim to enforce hierarchical consensus and consistency. For instance, it was common for artists to address students as they would any other client group, or as artists on a level with them. Students described this as making a difference to how they felt: a Year 9 boy who had worked with two creative practitioners on a youth governance project wrote in a diary entry that 'the relationships between adults and young people are completely different. Nicola and David are like friends or colleagues. This creates a much better atmosphere to work in, ideas flow more freely because you aren't afraid of voicing your opinions. You know that whatever you say will be considered.'

- Involvement in and evaluation of Creative Partnerships projects can help schools and teachers to reconsider their own relationships with young people – especially where they are used to more rigid and authoritarian ones. In reflecting on a school radio station set up by a creative media practitioner working with a small group of young people, the senior management team in a secondary school commented in an evaluation document that they became 'aware that we needed a level and trusted playing field with appropriate power structures and teachers and students. We felt that neither side should expect only to be heard, but also to hear.'

- Another example of Creative Partnerships funding being used to boost extra-curricular provision and increase students' feelings of being recognized or valued, was the establishment of a school orchestra (called a Rawchestra) at Matisse. It differed from a traditional school orchestra firstly, in being open to all: no previous experience of playing an instrument was required, and adults entered the project as learners alongside young people. Secondly, it developed pieces from ideas that members bought to the meetings – thus, a boy from Somalia sang a song from his home country in one session and another brought in some lyrics that he had written at home. Creative practitioners worked with the Rawchestra to arrange these pieces for the instruments (both assistive technologies and traditional instruments) that the adults and young people involved chose to play.

- When creative projects adopt a mode of working that does not focus on academic capabilities such as reading and writing, or speaking in certain (adult focused) ways projects can make 'visible' different aspects of both students and teachers in a school. One Year 1 teacher suggested that a drama project supported by Creative Partnerships provided her with, 'a real chance to see them [her students] being more creative, having this opportunity to be more relaxed and then seeing a side to them that you wouldn't see in a normal lesson.' At Delaunay the dance artist felt that giving children 'the opportunity to work together and be excited about creating movement and sculptures with their bodies' enabled them to support each other in ways that were sometimes difficult verbally. He felt that this was especially the case where children did not speak English as a first language or lacked confidence orally.

- Creative Partnerships' activities may be precisely the kind of 'extra-curricular' provision that enable schools to give positive accounts of themselves, and that demonstrate caring about the well-being of young people rather than only about their examination results, which can turn a school's reputation around (Thomson et al, 2009). The desire to tell different stories is not necessarily about being publicity-hungry: a student in our earlier research who remarked that ending up at a particular local ('hard') school was a sign that your parents 'did not love or care about you' revealed some rather more pressing reasons for changing the 'meaning' of a school. In one secondary school the deputy head narrated how projects organized by their creative agent - a school radio station and a youth led streetdance performance – enabled them to turn around the negative image they had previously held in the local area after newspaper stories reported their success.

- Young people frequently mentioned liking to see their own work displayed in communal and in classroom areas, and were dismissive of showy but static teacher-produced exhibits. Having creative practitioners in school as an additional resource and as someone skilled and confident in using visual/ aesthetic approaches, made it possible for displays to change more regularly, in turn providing young people with a sense of being valued and 'seen', rather than invisible and overlooked. At Lange nursery, staff documented activities on a daily basis through taking photographs and collecting children's work (whether 'finished' or not, and including all children rather than only 'best' work). A key task of the artist in residence was to collate and put this up in public areas every day, so the displays changed regularly. Children were often found together looking at and talking about these, delighting in pointing themselves out to adults (parents and staff), which often generated discussion around what they had done, and what they had enjoyed or disliked about the activity. The displays thereby became an important focus point for reflection. This approach to documentation and display both recognizes the interest that parents have in their children's learning lives and the children's active participation in their own learning.

- Creative Partnerships as an organization has consistently asked creative practitioners and teachers to build reflective structures into their projects, and have acknowledged the need to provide time for reflection and dialogue between teachers and artists, and between artists/ teachers and young people. For instance its evaluation criteria for projects requires creative agents to hold beginning, midpoint and endpoint conversations with teachers, creative practitioners and young people taking part. It also encourages teachers and creative practitioners to identify an 'enquiry question' at the start of their collaboration thereby encouraging them to take a step back from their own practice to reflect on and learn from it.

D.3   Convivial

D.3.1   The dimensions of a 'convivial' school ethos

In the context of a discussion of school ethos, using the word 'convivial', with its connotations of jolly drunkenness, is perhaps a risky strategy. Doing so is in part a way to assert the importance of fun, pleasure and enjoyment in learning processes; to remind us that teachers and students can enjoy being sociable, take pleasure in each others' company; that the need to eat, drink and dance is not irrelevant in school. The noted cultural critic Paul Gilroy refers to 'convivial cultures' in theorising post-colonial multiculturalism; his usage is particularly relevant to the work of Creative Partnerships because he instances the role of the arts and culture in enabling 'unruly, untidy and convivial modes of interaction' in which differences are actively negotiated but not necessarily resolved, and which hold out some hope of achieving mutual, imperfect cohabitation in civic life (Gilroy, 2004, 2005).

Ivan Illich (1975) also adopted the word in his 'Tools for Conviviality': his emphasis was on sociability and co-feeling, conviviality as 'individual freedom realized in personal interdependence' with a value placed on 'autonomous and creative intercourse among persons, and the intercourse of persons with their environment'; and this sense is close to ours, too. Convivial contrasts with some depictions of teachers and students as hostile, mutually exclusive groups with different interests: it stresses instead inter-relationships, our need and responsibility for the other; as such it is a profoundly ethical position, asking not what we should do, but as Wittgenstein said, how we can 'go on together' (cited in Shotter, 1993). In a convivial school one might expect recognition of the need to refocus the pedagogical relationship between a teacher and a learner in a more equitable way and a movement away from technical-rationalistic dreams of a 'knowable, measurable, controllable application to teaching and learning.' (Bibby, 2009: 41).

The dimensions of being convivial include:

1. Recognizing the role of pleasure, enjoyment and inspiration within learning; mutual support in rigorous, disciplined work that enables imaginative leaps; celebrating a range of achievements, not only academic (or academic and sporting) ones

2. Taking pleasure in each others' company, interest in each others' lives – perhaps particularly in relations between adults and students, but also among students; collegiality, appreciation generosity of spirit, moving away from learning as individual gain and advantage;

3. Interdependence, interrelatedness, not as choice but because we rely on others to become somebody, to be able to act, because identity and agency are social, created in relationships and *between* individuals rather than originating from within a single source;

4. The ethical consequences of interdependence: foregrounding mutual responsibility rather than disowning it through labeling (how do our practices produce qualities we locate in others, such as being 'unteachable', 'lacking aspirations'?);

5. Inter-relationships of knowledge (integrated curriculum rather than a series of unrelated subjects), the inside and the outside of school. For instance, a curriculum that connects with and absorbs the surrounding world, individual past histories and experiences; a recognition that development is seldom a linear process but involves referencing things learned in the past, from other(s) and from personal experience.

D.3.2 Convivial schools

Our schools provided many examples of enjoyment, mutual interest and 'emotional engagement' between teachers and students; lessons in which everyone seemed to feel they had something to offer or that they could ask questions without fear of mockery; confident teaching that involved knowing how to listen and to adapt teaching flexibly in response - a generosity of spirit that could be contrasted with what Bibby (2009) depicts as 'blocking' relationships, where a teacher is emotionally absent from the classroom and that Wexler (1992) argues may result in a 'contagious' lack of caring.

We also observed approaches that one practitioner described as a more 'democratic perspective on the child's acquisition of knowledge and learning', foregrounding the experience and curiosity that a child brings to learning and recognizing that learning is about 'creating knowledge together'. For instance at Lange nursery, children had freedom of movement and made their own choices about how and when to participate in activities from a wide range of options; staff aimed to value, support and extend their viewpoints through participating with them in activities; staff observed children - what they did and what they enjoyed - to inform ongoing work and practices. Such approaches are found more readily in early years and primary settings than in secondary schools, perhaps in part because they are not readily compatible with some common secondary practices such as setting and streaming, which serve to divide students; still less with visions of students sitting at individual desks in rows.

The ethical dimensions of conviviality were particularly clear in relation to Delaunay school, which regularly took on pupils excluded from other schools and some of whom who were on their 'last chance' for mainstream education. They included, for instance, an eight-year-old boy described by the headteacher at his previous school as 'feral, lazy and difficult to control', and a ten-year-old boy who was the youngest person in the area to receive an Anti-Social Behaviour Order (ASBO)[4]. Yet the school had considerable success in enabling them to integrate – they both settled in well, the second managed a year at Delaunay and went on a holiday with his classmates with no difficulties. In part this was because the school consciously engineered a 'fresh start' for them - only senior managers and class teachers read their file, other staff did not in order not to

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[4] ASBO: 'a court order obtainable by local authorities which places restrictions on the movements or actions of a person who persistently engages in anti-social behaviour. Introduced under Section 1 of the Crime and Disorder Act in 1998 and first applied in 1999' (Oxford English Dictionary online, accessed 31/03/11)

pre-judge them, marking an optimism about change and achievement, that people's potential is not foreclosed. But it was also because the ethos of the school was to be highly reflective about how its practices constituted their students, how they enabled or limited who they might be – such that the 'feral' child turned out to be one who hated to sit and listen, but could cope well if he was allowed the time he needed to play and explore. That is, his identity was not fixed but nor was it only up to him to change it: it depended on others, on the context, on how he was addressed, on how his behaviour was interpreted and on the breadth of responses and behaviours allowed him. The head who labelled a child 'feral' denied responsibility that anything about the school might contribute to that identity; Delaunay's approaches acknowledged implicitly that teachers and students do not come to school fully formed but are made in the process of interacting with each other. They recognize, as Facer (2008) argues, that young people depend on adult support, resources and networks to build capabilities and develop agency; and that adults should therefore take responsibility for what they offer.

Students to whom we talked at Sherman argued they had a say in their learning and that they felt responsible for it. Being 'responsible' is a clichéd enough term in educational circles, now, but an incident whilst shadowing a student for a day provided a positive example of agency emerging from interdependence, from the school's consistent attribution of capability to students. The field notes below come from a class when the teacher was absent and the supply instructions were to 'carry on with coursework'.

> Most of the students have finished their assignments but instead of mucking about they decide to swap papers for peer assessment. Someone says that the teacher likes to see evidence that others have checked their work. However it seems that many students are motivated by interest and because they understand and believe that they can learn with and from each other. Two students near to me, Joe and Elena, spend the rest of the lesson talking about their reading, swapping vocabulary, discussing it and writing it in their vocabulary books.
>
> <div align="right">Field notes - October 2009</div>

It is, unfortunately, all too common in current educational debates to depict the urban or inner-city school (in particular) as a beacon or citadel, radically different to its surroundings, a haven and the only means of escape from hardship and anti-learning home cultures. Our convivial schools, by contrast, rejected such deficit discourses about disadvantaged families and were far more positive about students' cultures and experiences: at Lange nursery a staff member described children as 'conductors of their own symphonies', a richly generative image in terms of the creativity and complexity it attributed to children. Asked during a training day about what inspired them, one group of Delaunay teachers brought their students, and another group brought 'each other'. Delaunay's deputy head, writing for a book about creative approaches to participation, described the, 'extensive wealth of world knowledge within the school community' and how teachers 'greatly value this diversity and are always seeking meaningful opportunities for children to develop dialogues which draw upon their different experiences within the world.' In addition, Delaunay's international linking work with Pakistan and the Lebanon tried to demonstrate mutual and global interrelationships.

Learning that connected with students' lives and interests impacted on social relationships as young people became experts and teachers learners; it also reinforced children's learning as they tried to pass their own experiences and knowledge on to teachers. Lange nursery was relatively unusual in developing and working with children's interest in superheroes; many early years settings are uncomfortable with and even prohibit violent or weapon-related play. Children at Delaunay were encouraged to draw on their experiences in other countries, for instance in a playground redesign project the teacher asked a child who had previously been to school in Thailand about his playground there. The children were fascinated as he explained that it had had no playground at all and why.

A convivial atmosphere was also important in relation to staff retention and their professional dialogue and practice. This is related both to the creation of spaces where teachers feel comfortable to come together and discuss their practice, and a culture where this is encouraged. So, the Delaunay and Lange staff rooms were frequently the site for animated discussions and exchanges and at Matisse teachers commented that they were 'not expected to fit into a mould'; the belief in staff demonstrated by the senior management team led teachers to build on their own interests and develop, in one teacher's words, a 'conscious competence' in respect to their ability to design learning. Economies of scale, and tight timetabling in secondary schools meant staff were less likely to meet in staffrooms and therefore tended to form smaller groups within subject areas, around interests, or as in Warhol, through regular shared training sessions (for a large group of newly qualified and Teach First teachers).

D.3.3 Creative Partnerships and convivial school ethos

- Creative Partnerships projects were generally experienced as exciting and enjoyable. One of many examples of this occurred at Lange nursery where the children enjoyed working with a storyteller, as suggested in these field notes:

    > When the children came out of the space they were all very enthusiastic- many of them wanted to tell the other staff and children in the nursery about it. The resident artist videoed two boys trying to explain about 'Billy Boat Buff' and resorting to showing what happened through actions as they felt unable to express it in words. A little girl came out saying, "I been with John…that's John" and then started to role-play the story again with some plastic animals in the nursery.
    >
    > (Field notes, January 2010)

- In Warhol, Creative Partnerships projects offered something of a refuge from the more hierarchical, negative and impersonal relationships experienced elsewhere in the school - between adults and young people and even among students. A female student commented how 'Sally (the artist) helps us a lot and we help each other.'

- Creative Partnerships offers teachers new pleasures and inspirations, for instance, through creative practitioner-run workshops. At Delaunay primary school, teachers worked with creative practitioners to make a collaborative sculpture with their bodies to: express community, reflect on the future of education, and discuss their own inspirations. It brought the staff together in ways that they described as enjoyable and stimulating. A student-led training at Warhol School was similarly well received by staff. The Creative Partnerships coordinator at Warhol School also mentioned that her role offered professional motivation and enjoyment.

- 'Creative' approaches may legitimize partnership working, collaboration and mutually supportive relationships between teachers. For example, an outcome of Creative Partnerships work in one large primary school was that teachers began planning lessons together, often echoing the kinds of approaches that specific Creative Partnerships projects had used:

    > The teachers – all women - drink tea and pass round sweets as they work, there is banter and laughter amidst serious focus. There is no creative practitioner present; for the teachers this meeting is now a regular, unexceptional event. Yet I am struck by the creativity of the exchanges, how the plans evolve collectively, sparking from one idea to the next, and how they

support the less experienced or confident teachers. The legacy of Creative
Partnerships in this school appears to include a pleasure in collegiality, and a
casual creativity all the more remarkable for being taken for granted…
(Field notes March 2008, cited in Bragg, Manchester and Faulkner, 2009)

- At Warhol a creative practitioner worked on a global garden project bringing
teachers together from across subject areas to develop creative, cross-curricular
lessons. It was an important first step in encouraging a disparate staff, who rarely
met during the school day, to discuss practice and begin to develop a shared
professional dialogue.

- Creative Partnerships' work could challenge traditional hierarchies and role allocations.
For instance, the resident visual artist at Delaunay trained all the teaching assistants in
techniques of creative documentation which they took back into the classes they worked in
– instantly providing them with a pivotal role in recording the children's learning and
development. Teachers were then able to learn from the teaching assistants as they put
their new knowledge into practice.

- A Creative Partnerships coordinator described the relationships involved in child-centred,
cooperative approaches - working as a group, in using each other as a resource, pooling
ideas collectively - and the commitment and engagement such an approach produced from
students in response:

    It's about being brave enough to say to kids, "….I wonder if we could get our
    heads together and think of something that would cover all that [required
    content], commit to changing the way in which we learn…. And I have an idea
    that if we were to do something about growing an outside garden which could
    help us look at some of the science of that, measuring things out, talking about
    the processes, then that might be a way forward and I wonder if anybody's got
    any ideas about how we can bring that together?".
    (cited in Bragg, Manchester and Faulkner, 2009)

- Forest School approaches also foreground the social and emotional in learning and
practitioners following these methods often created moments of extraordinary conviviality:
as when a Forest School trained teacher at Delaunay Primary School built a firepit and
cooked nettle soup with the three year olds in nursery; they first picked the nettles
themselves (without gloves) and helped her to collect sticks and build the fire before they
all sat around it, sharing the soup.

- A project at Delaunay provided particular challenge, mutual support and learning across
expectations. In a series of sessions that explored 'community' and 'care', Year 5 and Year
1 children were asked to work in mixed groups with a dance artist, a drama artist, their
class teachers and teaching assistants to produce collaborative sculptures using their
bodies, a focus that encouraged them to consider the physical and emotional presence of
others in their groups. Initially the Year 5s felt the younger children had nothing to offer
and were aggrieved that they had to work with them. The artists continually challenged
such beliefs, asking them to reflect deeply on their feelings and experiences as the project
progressed. In his own reflective journal the dance artist noted:

    It was the year 5 children that were not welcoming. They were not open, and
    wanted to work within their own friendship groups pushing the Year 1 children
    to one side to dominate the group work although the Year 1 children were more

able and experienced in working with some pretty difficult and risky shapes. The reflection with each class opened up the thinking of both classes. Year 5 thought that the Year 1 children did not have the knowledge, experience or ideas to take a lead (they did!) and Year 1 felt that they were not being listened to or valued.

(Artist diary)

Throughout the project the mixed age groups learnt how to value each other and to understand the value, as well as the challenges, in working together. However, some of the children found the process extremely challenging. Importantly this project was seen as part of the school's ongoing work to increase understanding between children in the school and the wider community; the artists and teachers involved used this project to stimulate further reflection with the children on the benefits and challenges in working across year groups and the assumptions that this work unsettled.

- A self-portrait project, led by an artist at Sherman School, also developed emotional engagement and mutuality. Reflecting on his art work a year 7 boy described feeling like he had weights on his shoulders as he got older and was asked to take on more responsibilities; a girl showed a 'masked' self portrait and discussed feeling she needed to put on a mask when she came to school; 'you can't really be yourself'. The teacher responded that being a teacher was also like a performance, as she showed her own ghost-like portrait. Many of the young people had expressed a 'fear' of this teacher (who was also their head of year) when the project began, which the teacher laughingly admitted to encouraging. However, her participation in the project helped to change her relationship with her students, making her more approachable but not less respected.

- Creative projects could, particularly in secondary schools, offer relatively rare sociability, as we also noted in D.2.3. At Warhol School, young people commented that a textile artist gave them more choice about how to work together: she 'shows us how she does it first, and then we get to choose how we want to do it'; she 'allows us to be creative learners - to get up, learn how you want to learn, feedback, help each other, make things, make mistakes and it doesn't matter.' They commented that this approach made them feel more confident about working with other people so that 'when we go out, when we meet new people we're less shy and we're more confident about it.' This was echoed by a creative practitioner in a Midlands secondary school who felt that she was able to 'open up a space for students to talk' that contrasted with the pressure to complete activities in short time-scales that they faced in many of their lessons.

- The presence of creative practitioners in school provides young people with an opportunity to interact with adults who can be very different to those they are likely to meet in their everyday lives otherwise - as young people at Delaunay formed affectionate as well as respectful relationships with the young black gay dance artist.

- Some creative projects have used social media to extend networks, posting material on websites and encouraging comments on blogs.

- Creative Partnerships projects promoted contacts and connections with adults in the wider community – such as the police, social workers, youth workers, local councillors, other artists. For example, young people involved in a social media project produced a podcast about youth-police relations in their community and as part of the production process approached the police for an interview.

- In one school, former students who worked professionally as artists were invited to run

Creative Partnerships projects – offering schools and individual students a range of new pathways into and with the real world.

- Creative projects were often used as a way to bring students' lives into school, for example through youth-produced media projects that enable reflection on issues such as gang culture; or through teachers (such as at Matisse) using the skills and resources of creative media practitioners to help them to draw on the students' cultural lives outside school, for example through utilizing media forms such as scratching, mash ups and video games in their lessons.

- At Delaunay the whole school had a day off timetable to come up with ideas for a playground redesign. There was an energy and buzz throughout the school as the children and staff worked with three resident artists, the architects and representatives from the building company involved in the redesign. Different groups of young people were initiating and participating in a range of activities: Year 6 girls designed a dance pad area in the playground, boys in Year 5 built a den together, and a group of Year 2s worked with a teaching assistant to make a castle out of a cardboard box. An office space set up for the architects in the hall area was continually buzzing with children coming to sit with and explain their many ideas, which were also presented in a variety of forms, using different creative approaches and technologies. How the school took up and appreciated learners' personal resources and views was fundamental to affirming their value and thereby in building a sense of agency.

D.4   Capacious

D.4.1 Dimensions of a 'capacious' school ethos

Dictionary definitions of capacious refer to 'being able to contain'; able to hold much, roomy, spacious, wide; having the capacity *of;* adapted or disposed for the reception *of.* … qualified *to do* something. This indicator helps us refer to the space-making aspects of creative school ethos, which allow more range, more room for manoeuvre or elbow room in school and in learning; also to increasing capacity or capability of both teachers and students, a taking-out to a further horizon. We use it also to capture some of the insights of psychoanalytic perspectives on learning touched on in the literature review, about the necessity of 'holding doubt' in learning and creativity, of acknowledging but also managing negative emotions and fear of failure.

Finally, we use it to refer to the spaces of education: to paying attention to aesthetics and material environment. As we will show, this is an area where Creative Partnerships has made particular impact.

In sum:

1. Being capacious does not necessarily imply schools can expand their physical environments, but it does involve attention to the space and aesthetics of the school

2. Being capacious involves a commitment to possibility; allowing space for difference, for failing, for struggle; for a wider range of identities; new practices emerging; a greater fluidity in roles; an openness to the world, a sense of being in process, dynamic, changing, even where this involves discomfort, incompleteness; and a capacity to embrace difference, to cope with difficulty.

3. Capaciousness involves the holding and containing that may be essential to creativity and to learning – recognizing the emotional support it requires, the pain and difficulty of learning.

4. It can involve an expanded sense of self and others; a sense of agency and being able to act; an exploration of our complementarity and a sharing of risks.

5. Capacious as expanded horizons and the rigour of taking beyond what someone thinks they are capable of: a broader view of students that they are more than minds. Posing challenges and demanding courage to endure the transitional time or condition of a process in which one is no longer what one was, is not yet something else, and so is something in-between, something marginal, flexible, full of possibility yet excruciatingly inchoate.

6. Looking beyond the school gates, drawing on other resources, not being insular but rather, porous, open to other influences.

D.4.2 Capacious schools

A literal as well as metaphorical illustration of what being capacious might involve was provided by Lange nursery's decision to restructure its indoor layout dramatically, knocking down walls to create a more free flowing space. This generated a considerably more spacious feel to the environment; but it is equally significant that the nursery did this soon after receiving an 'outstanding' Ofsted report. The change was therefore riskier since the temptation could have been to carry on with what was already working well. Practitioners explained the decision as arising from their general commitment to continual reflection on what works or does not work for the children and how to best use the environment of the nursery; a sense of uncertainty and constant change as the only way that they could respond well to their children. The capacity to tolerate such uncertainty may have been enabled by a number of factors, including staff confidence in their professionalism, their collegiality and support, and the presence of a resident artist who demonstrated through her own practice that not being afraid to try new approaches and reflecting on them can create a different (and potentially better) environment for learning.

Delaunay's 'capaciousness' is particularly unusual. As we have already noted, the school entrance shows picture of the war-torn daily life of a child in their partner school in the Lebanon, whilst the main hall's display about the kind of world children want to live in refers to poverty, racism, abuse. These all strike a slightly dissonant note with the more familiar primary school practice of decreeing compulsory contentment – such as the 'welcome' sign announcing that 'Delaunay is a happy place to be'. Poverty, bombs and warfare are not the concepts most commonly tackled within a primary environment, even though many children are thoroughly familiar with them even before they start school; being confident enough to acknowledge their existence is itself remarkable, enabled by staff professionalism and confidence and representing a more expansive and complex view of children than the pastoral view of sunny innocents.

At Delaunay children had a confident sense of agency. We noted in D.2.3 that they took charge of our focus group and occupied the space normally reserved for adults, expressing hospitality and concern for our well-being. Other visitors, external organizations and new teachers also commented on their confidence and capacity to be articulate and ask questions. As noted above on p.44, on the playground redesign day they readily engaged in conversation with architects and builders about their ideas for a new outdoor space. This 'capacity to act' extended to providing emotional sustenance for others. A resident artist at the school reported that:

> A boy I'd been working with approached me to first ask me what religion I was, he then wanted to know if I had a mum and dad. I told him I had a mum but my dad had died when

I was fourteen. The boy reached over and put his hand on my arm and said "my dad's died too so I know how it feels."

The resident artist at Lange Nursery also described a capacity to act in relation to the three and four year olds attending their school,

Virtually all visitors have a feel for the place as soon as they come in that the children are really confident. They move around the whole building, inside and outside. They approach adults, they're curious they'll ask questions and they're all engaged in something even if it's just watching.

As we noted above, p. 41, in Lange staff meetings that we observed, everyone contributed, regardless of how long they'd been working at the school, or what their job title was; although of course its relatively small scale would have helped promote confidence.

Capacious schools encourage and allow difference rather than demanding conformity, amongst staff as well as children. The male dance artist at Delaunay was chosen by the school in part to contribute to its ethos of acknowledging and celebrating difference; he commented that he enjoyed working there because the children were 'allowed to be eccentric, they don't have to be standardized'. Nor did staff have to conform to one method or approach to teaching and learning: one member of staff, who was very popular with the children, believed firmly in providing opportunities for physical activity through traditional games and sports; another used salsa to teach Spanish; whilst a third teacher brought his interest in the natural world into school to share with the children. We were able to chart the changing relationship between the first teacher and the deputy head from early in our youth voice research, when the latter was keen to make him see the value of creative and less competitive approaches, which he was resisting. By the end of our research, she acknowledged with good humour that she had come to understand his arguments and value what he did, while he too had become less unbending about alternative approaches. Given that pedagogical approaches tend to come in and out of fashion, it would seem pragmatically wise for schools not to invest in and impose a single model of teaching and learning.

Similarly, at Lange, the head teacher argued that staff 'are always open to change and we're always changing', that this 'ethos' enabled people to feel able to make suggestions and become involved in a dialogue as 'everybody's view is respected and valued, even if we don't agree. And we don't always agree.' Difference and even conflict was seen as a positive force for change, rather than something to be avoided. Both settings appreciated the need for a range of approaches to 'really tune into children'; because learning was open ended and unpredictable, it required teachers to 'listen with all their senses' to children. The head teacher at Lange suggested that such openness to where learning might take children could itself foster capacity:

We want to allow children to be curious. And if they're curious they can do more for themselves. There's a range of ways of being involved and children will find their own route and their own way and if they develop confidence in an aspect then that will lead them onto something else. It's quite natural for some children not to like some things as much as others and that is quite acceptable.

(Lange head teacher, interview)

Staff at Lange were led by the knowledge that children brought to nursery, from their families, their culture and their experiences, seeing it as a building block from which to extend and expand learning. When children began playing with and looking through cardboard tubes, their interest was developed into a focus on 'different ways of seeing'. Staff began with a mind-mapping exercise, introduced them to artists such as Andy Goldsworthy and Yann Arthus-Bertrand and even climbed to the tops of tall buildings in the city, so that children could take birds-eye and eye-level photographs.

Capacious schools continually focus their gaze outwards, seeing school boundaries as permeable rather than walled-in. Such openness might involve practices such as young people working with children from feeder primaries, or with professionals from outside school; an emphasis on applying learning in different contexts and real-life situations; inviting people in to experience the school and share their expertise, making different kinds of connections with parents (beyond parents evenings) and with wider (including global) communities outside of school. So, students from the student media crew at Matisse trained children and staff from a partner primary school in filming techniques, taking their knowledge into a different environment and reinforcing it.

Partner organizations working with Matisse pointed to teachers' willingness to take risks; their frank and rigorous self-evaluation (including the extensive use of student voice); the ongoing support they provided, an acknowledgement from those at Matisse that they are learning too; and the mutual support amongst staff and young people at Matisse. They said that these factors led them to feel 'confident and trusted enough to be open about their own fears or lack of confidence when embarking on new territory' (Matisse School External Review Report, 2009).

Delaunay's global linking projects with schools in Pakistan and the Lebanon did not construct people there as exotic or pitiable objects, but as fellow citizens working together to 'explore some of the big question about how to be active global citizens who can affect change in a responsible way.' Topics such as 'energy' and political leadership were explored and shared across the schools. The work also challenged teachers to reconsider their own preconceptions about these countries through first hand experience – new learning that they were then encouraged to share with other members of the school community including other teachers and parents.

Openness and sharing practice – as many have argued – encourages schools to consider and articulate it, which increases their capacity to reflect and (re)-consider their work. The resident artist at Lange Nursery explained:

> Having had a number of visitors over the years we've had to articulate what we're doing and why and why it's important to us. That's helped everybody – particularly in terms of staff development and confidence.
>
> (Resident artist, interview)

Likewise at Delaunay the deputy head said that she felt that through completing forms for external funders, leading a cluster of schools and engaging with research,

> My thinking, my vision, my values and my understanding of what we're about and where we want to go have been encapsulated – the journey that we're taking has become intrinsic to my way of thinking.
>
> (Deputy head, interview)

D.4.3 Creative Partnerships and capacious school ethos

- In secondary schools young people taking part in Creative Partnerships projects suggested that they created a 'space' (even if it was within school and a traditional classroom) that felt more flexible and open than a traditional classroom one. Participants in a creative clinic project at Warhol created rituals to show that it was a freer space where they could experiment and expand their identities. As they entered the room, the young men in particular would don pink fingerless gloves (made from old tights) and elaborate name badges that they had designed themselves; they would also spontaneously begin to work on their creative projects and ideas together without having to be asked. All this was very different from the more regimented and laddish ethos elsewhere in the school, where 'creativity' was seen as suspiciously soft and the all-black uniform was rigidly policed (even

suppressing an attempt at aesthetic variation by girls who began wearing headscarves with decorative details rather than plain ones).

- Creative Partnerships projects often focus on space, generating new attention to the environment and what it means, how it might be changed and used. When the Building Schools for the Future initiative was active, space could sometimes be fundamentally re-thought. The early years team at Delaunay, working with the resident artist, transformed the playground space in the new-build nursery to create a vibrant area where exploration, experimentation and risk taking were encouraged, exuberance and risk-taking were allowed, but quiet spaces and places to hide were also provided – recognizing, perhaps, how spaces for young people outside school were increasingly constrained.

- School staff could develop an awareness of the material environment through artistic interventions, and through professional development activities around creative approaches. In one school, described by Hall, Thomson and Jones (2008), members of an art and architecture collective highlighted previously overlooked aspects of space: for instance, using pedometers revealed the great distances covered each day by some support staff. They showed what could be achieved adaptively, rather than through new-build, by transforming a dreary courtyard with a stunning arrangement of yellow ribbons. They explained that 'our belief, as artists, is that your environment is meaningful in every way that it works. So everything in that environment should be considered and curated, if you like, or organised in a particular way.' Through this work staff were provided with tools, metaphors and language for talking about and rethinking school environments.

- Delaunay also invested a considerable sum of money in floor length black-out curtains for the hall space in the school. Drawing them created a studio which felt very different aesthetically to the classroom spaces, or indeed the hall without the curtains; it was dark, shut out the daylight, muffled the noise of other classrooms, and encouraged focus. Yet, this creative space was central to the school and adapted from what was already there, rather than assigned to a separate area as is often the case in schools. Symbolically, the curtains signal that creativity is *a part* of everyday life, not *apart* from it; that spaces can have different meanings depending on what is made of them; perhaps they also contain the creative activity that goes on within this studio, suggesting it can be held and be managed by the school, and that children will not be abandoned after their experiences there, but will return to familiarity and safety right at the heart of the school. Again, this is very different from the notion of the school as a fortress, offering instead an image of creativity in school that enables rather than prevents openness to the world.

- In another symbolic move, the fences around Delaunay were adapted to do much more than to enclose and exclude; they became adorned with plastic pipes for experiments with water and an interactive sound sculpture made from old pots and pans and pieces of wood.

- Education is structured in time as well as space: Creative Practitioners often helped disrupt the strict 'clock'/ calendar time segmentation in schools with its focus on finding the 'right' answer in a certain timeframe. The 'tempo' (or the speed, pace and intensity) of creative activities reflected in part the different circumstances in which artists often worked compared to teachers (with smaller groups, for longer stretches). At Delaunay staff and artists discussed together how creative projects slowed down processes of working 'giving space for all of us to have more ideas and work things out,' which they contrasted with the pressures to 'fit in' all of the curriculum that they often felt in the classroom. Creative Partnerships projects could also help schools think about reorganizing their timetables, taking advantage of the flexibility they had to do so, and relating

decisions to reflections on the nature of learning.

- In many areas, Creative Partnerships staff provided professional development on Reggio Emilia and/ or Forest School approaches, which encourage reflection on learning, integrated curriculum approaches, mixed ability teaching, learning about and in natural environments, seeing 'the environment as third teacher', and which are based on taking the lead from the child, following their interests, rather than delivering pre-packaged curriculum.

- A group of young women at Sherman suggested that opportunities to express themselves through creative forms helped to create a space where they could experiment with 'being somebody else' or 'let out anger and emotions and create something'. The dance artist at Delaunay also believed that his sessions helped to raise issues that did not always surface in more 'controlled' sessions in classrooms, such as difficult group dynamics; and that where reflection becomes an integral part of the creative work 'there is an opportunity to support children at a deeper level.'

- In one primary school, a professional photographer took portraits of the families of one class and asked them to record their hopes for the future. The outcomes challenged the myth of a culture of 'low aspirations' in poor communities, revealing parents' ambitions and hopes for their children. As a result, teachers realized, for the first time, the diversity of experiences and desires within the school community, and began to consider how they could better include parents in the school, both to support their children but also to support curriculum delivery. By valuing and understanding children's home cultures and experiences in this way they started to break down some of the boundaries between home and school.

- Creative practitioners are often concerned with aspects of learning and knowing that appeal to other senses as well as the mind, for instance an aesthetic sense, or stimulating aural, visual and embodied ways of understanding and meaning making. For instance, Creative Partnerships work often contributed to the visual environment of a school in valuing the aesthetic experiences of those in a school. In one school the foyer was transformed into a gallery space with a comfortable sofa and four striking illuminated glass panels, the work of a cohort of Year 6 children. This enriched physical and visual environment continued in classrooms and outdoor spaces, where teacher- and child-produced artifacts featured more prominently than the more familiar, commercially-produced 'motivational' posters.

- Creative Partnerships work increases the capacity of teachers through long-term partnerships with creative practitioners as well as more specific CPD offered through Area Delivery Organizations, and access to research. At Matisse the deputy head teacher argued that involvement with Creative Partnerships helped show that CPD happens in many different forms and to embed a learning culture within the school. As teachers worked alongside artists, the deputy head suggested, they began to feel differently about their own capacity (to be creative and to learn), to feel that '*we* could do that. We need to be moved on as well'. The long-term relationships involved may make it easier to share burdens and feel more comfortable taking risks. As one teacher working in a primary School of Creativity suggested, 'we are very open to new ideas and that ethos now goes throughout the school – that you can take a risk, you can have a go. If it doesn't work then you do it again, or you change it for next time. That's definitely one of the benefits of artists coming in'. Creative Partnerships work brings fresh perspectives and new ways of thinking into schools that challenge and expand notions of learning, developing staff 'in a way that perhaps they would never have seen as a possibility' and 'raising issues they

weren't anticipating, encouraging some of us away from long held ideas,' according to one headteacher.

- The deputy head at Sherman School argued that creative approaches highlighted the benefits of, and discipline associated with working from and with mistakes - 'developing it further and you work it and work it and work it.'

- Creative Partnerships projects may be enjoyable and collaborative, but they are also rigorous, disciplined and demanding. In the Year 1 and Year 5 project at Delaunay described earlier the two artists working acknowledged that they were engaging in a process fraught with difficulty and tensions: the dance artist reflected that 'creating movement based within a community of care and trust is challenged by their ability to work with each other effectively. It is hampered by falling out; wanting their ideas to be used and finding it almost too challenging to find ways to make ideas fit, meld'. These tensions were not ignored but embraced as part of, indeed the most important part, of the learning – not as an easy process involving 'sharing' and compromise but a difficult process replete with tensions and doubt.

- Teachers were also encouraged to draw on their own expertise and enthusiasm for creative methods and expression. For instance, at Matisse the arts and humanities coordinator in the school was also a musician, and Creative Partnerships funding enabled him to work alongside a creative media and assistive technologies practitioner. He now works closely with musicians and media professionals on the Rawchestra project and other cross-curricular projects in school. He remarked that he had been at Matisse for 11 years - 'ten years longer than anywhere else': the variety and new opportunities helped keep him in post and his expertise available for the school.

- Creative Partnerships places young people 'at the heart' of what it does and requires rethinking of assumptions about their capabilities and capacity to act. Young people can be trapped by these just as can their teachers: in a secondary school a young man described how being selected as a student researcher for a Creative Partnerships project renewed his self-perception: 'I thought I was too thick to do anything like this!'.

- But teachers too are often astounded when they witness the quality of work that artists and students produce; the oft-heard remark that 'I didn't know my kids could do that' suggests a shift of worldview in relation to their students' abilities. Creative practitioners' ways of working can disrupt ability groupings and ascribed classroom identities: a teacher found that re-arranging classroom groupings at the request of a creative practitioner resulted in children 'talking to people they never usually talked to' and made her reconsider the previously unquestioned practice of setting by ability.

Section E: References

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Appendix: School Sketches

This appendix provides background information about each of our case study schools and their relationship with Creative Partnerships. It is intended as a resource to support reading of the main body of this report.

Contents
1. Delaunay Primary School
2. Lange Nursery
3. Matisse School
4. Sherman School
5. Warhol School

Delaunay Primary School

School Context

Location	Small Midlands city, urban location
Age range	3-11
No. on roll	Approx 230

School population	A diverse and highly transient population that includes a number of children of overseas university students as well as families living in the neighbourhood in conditions of poverty. Over twenty different languages are spoken by pupils attending the school.
Aspects of practice	The school has a number of international linking projects, with a school in Pakistan and another in the Lebanon – focus on global citizenship. Early years work draws on Reggio and Forest school approaches.
Official school ethos	The school vision is for a 'happy, confident and successful school community which is positive and forward looking, respects and listens, is supportive and challenging' (School prospectus, 2007-2008).

Creative Partnerships at Delaunay Primary School

Status: School of Creativity

History of Creative Partnerships work

The creative agent believes that the school was 'ripe for change' when Creative Partnerships came along, but that a period of trust building was necessary. The school is committed to working closely with artists as part of their practice and has demonstrated this by making the decision to employ two artists to work permanently with the school from mainstream (not Creative Partnerships) funding streams. The deputy head says that this is because they have 'seen the difference' that artists can make in their school.

Senior managers describe often finding it difficult to balance the demands made on them with what they feel is 'right' for the children. However they have found Creative Partnerships, or more broadly an orientation towards creative approaches, offers them a language to discuss and develop whole-staff commitment to a way of thinking and a range of practices. This has been a long journey for them with much time and resources expended. However the deputy head believes that:

> [Now] that journey that we're taking has become intrinsic to the way we are thinking, it's been put into SDP thinking, into school strategy… that clarity of thinking, that commitment goes across the whole school.

<div align="right">Deputy head, March 2010</div>

In 2009-2010 the school worked with a particular enquiry focus: *How can we develop a creative*

curriculum that nurtures the skills and qualities we need to be active, responsible citizens who are agents of change within our local and global community? The Creative Agent suggests that this represents the school's key commitments to 'developing global citizenship, social responsibility, creativity and collaborative learning'.

Creative Practitioner involvement

- a creative agent for last three years; previously she had worked with them as a creative practitioner, particularly on their international linking projects.
- two resident artists – the creative agent (a drama artist) works in the school two days a week and a visual artist also works two days a week at the school, particularly with the early years and foundation stage staff and children.
- a dance artist also works a day a week with the school
- a digital media practitioner

Creative projects 2009-2010

- The creative agent and dance artist delivered a project focusing on global citizenship and community cohesion.
- The creative agent worked alongside a newly qualified teacher to support her in her first year of teaching
- The resident visual artist worked with the foundation unit; redesigning their outdoor space and on 'pedagogical documentation'. She has a strong interest in Reggio approaches and Scandinavian pedagogy (eg Forest Schools) and after a visit abroad delivered INSET for Delaunay staff – including a whole day INSET for teaching assistants concerning pedagogical documentation.
- The digital media practitioner worked closely with a small group of interested young people and staff to increase the effective and appropriate use of technology across the school.

Striking aspects of school ethos

- caring relationships between adults and children

  I think the school is like a dog because you know a dog is your friend and will come back to you, if you fall over in the playground more and more people come and help you and take you to a teacher, and if you've actually got a graze or something you'll get a sticker … someone might get worried and cry in a test and the teacher will come and say 'you don't need to cry, it's just to see what stage you're on.'

  Year 4 girl, focus group, March 2010

- staff other than teachers (eg midday supervisors) valued for their role – in a focus group children took photographs to represent 'relationships' that showed children and support staff – the lunchtime organisers – looking after other children in the playground

- supportive relationships between children – across age groups eg in a focus group they formed groups across year groups

- valuing student work eg display in central hall made by current students

- respectful and participatory relationships and structures to value students' ideas/ a sense of student and staff capacity eg on whole school playground consultation day children took it for granted that they had something to say that should be listened to and their ideas were taken on board and used to inform the final design

- openness to the outside world – global citizenship work, frequent visits outside school seeing the local area and all within it (not only the school) as the context for learning

- attention to the school environment, to enabling different spaces in the school eg the floor length curtains in the central hall area of the school that create a different kind of space

- long-term collaborative relationships between staff as well as between staff and creative practitioners

- practitioners embody and bring 'difference' into the school eg the dance practitioner

- attention to staff needs and CPD, including induction into school ethos and values eg resident artists deliver INSETs for whole staff

- creativity begins to address more profound and difficult issues, rather than being a 'fun', optional extra

- Children are also not afraid to criticise the school. A familiar refrain over the playground consultation project was that they had been 'waiting 5 years for this' - as a pupil remarked in relation to some initial consultation that had taken place before any funding had been obtained

- Staff encourage a wide variety of responses and a sense of a range of possibilities eg On the playground consultation day children were asked for their views via graffiti boards, in debates, through making up poetry and songs, animations and computer-aided drawings and maps, and in tableaux.

- A commitment to creating space and time for possibility eg a recognition of the need for sufficient time and space to enable children - and teachers - to explore different ideas and to retreat from the demands and pressures placed on them by much of the curriculum.

- Staff continually reflect on their own practice and the children's learning eg teaching assistants play a vital role in this process, following training with an artist. The school is developing different approaches to evidence gathering and charting children's learning, gathering documentation that happens in the moment, followed by reflection – for instance, audio-recording snatches of children's conversations to which they then listen carefully, attending to children's exact words. The deputy head describes this as not only 'a means for recording children and group journeys', but also 'you as an adult constantly reflecting and interpreting'.

Lange Nursery

School Context

Location	Large city, urban location
Age range	3-4
No. on roll	Approx 78
School population	The school serves a transient population. The percentage of children from minority ethnic groups attending the school is high, and many of the children speak English as an additional language as well as having a range of other additional needs. Many of the practitioners working at the nursery have been working there for a long time. The head teacher has worked at the school for over 20 years, and her own children attended the nursery.
Aspects of practice	Staff draw on Reggio Emilia and Forest School approaches, which they adapt for purpose.
Official school ethos	In the words of the artist in residence, writing for a forthcoming book on creative learning: 'The school's overarching ethos is aimed at providing the environment and support in which children can be curious, make significant discoveries and mistakes, and fully enjoy their time learning about the world we live in, whilst building relationships with other children and adults.'

Creative Partnerships at Lange nursery

Creative Partnerships status: School of Creativity

History of Creative Partnerships work

Staff at the school say that Creative Partnerships has supported them in moving towards and embracing different ways of working. Many staff have visited Reggio Emilia in Italy and all senior managers have also been to Denmark to find out about and train as Forest school teachers. The school has recently developed a Forest school area on land near the school, to which they regularly take children. They use it for developing 'social skills' and work there involves building on what children know and using all their senses.

As a result of the ongoing and long term addition of an artist to their core team staff, and some of the practices encouraged by Creative Partnerships, staff development has become an ongoing process that has encouraged all staff to reflect and enter into a process of inquiry with the children,

> Creative Partnerships enables staff. It has developed staff in a way that perhaps they would never have seen as a possibility. And maybe we wouldn't have done in the past either. So it opens some doors. It also just makes us think and reflect – all the time we question what we're doing and why we're doing it. What might be right this year will be different from next year because you've got to look at your children and make sure that we know about them.
>
> Head teacher, Lange nursery, October 2009

CPD opportunities that Creative Partnerships has helped to fund have helped to provide staff with a shared language to talk about and understand what they do within the school. This has involved them taking on Reggio or Forest school philosophies with critical reflection and discussion, working out together how to relate these approaches to their own local context.

They have also spent time and invested money in their outdoor and indoor spaces; making the outside play area more aesthetically appealing, and letting one area go wild, and knocking down walls to make a more open plan space inside the nursery building.

Creative Practitioner involvement

- A resident artist works at the school three days a week and is a member of the school governing body
- The nursery has long term relationships with various creative practitioners including a potter, some musicians (including an African drums practitioner), a bhangra dancer and a storyteller. As the staff is all-female, male practitioners are often selected in order to offer positive male role models

Creative work 2009-1010

- A variety of creative practitioners made regular visits to work with the children
- A storyteller worked with all of the children in the nursery, firstly on 're-telling' fairy stories and then on making up their own stories.
- The resident artist worked with children on a daily basis, designing creative activities as an integral part of the activities on offer to children
- All staff contributed to the production of a book as part of an exhibition entitiled, 'Creative Childhoods'
- The resident artist worked with a cluster of local schools to share and disseminate practice
- Staff have continued to redevelop indoor and outdoor spaces at the nursery.

Striking aspects of the school's ethos

In summary:

- Sense of a 'holding' structure– children quickly learn the 'rhythm of the day', which is both flexible and predictable

- Attention to different 'needs' of the child, such as needs for comfort and aesthetic needs in relation to the school environment eg massage sessions provide for social and emotional needs

- Constant documentation to mark processes (not only products) of learning – through ongoing and creative documentation techniques

- Ever-changing wall displays communicate to children not only adults as in many schools – photographs of activities remind children of their experiences and encourage staff and children to reflect on learning together

- Sense of the potential of the child – not pre-judging, assumption that they can self-direct and that they are creative and curious

- Wide range of provision – eg in activities provided for children and also in the variety of creative practitioners who come in to work with them

- concern to build on children's interests, not only follow staff agendas – recognizing, eg, the role popular-media culture plays in their lives in superheroes work, cardboard tubes becoming 'ways of seeing'

- awareness of importance of space, inside and outside eg continual adaptation and change in how space is constructed

- prioritising of staff reflection time – daily meetings held at the end of each day in addition to a weekly staff meeting

- stable staff body, enabling consistency and development of values and practice

Matisse School

School Context

Location	Large northern city, urban location
Age range	11-19
No. on roll	Approx 150
School population	Students at the school all have statements of special educational need because of their severe or profound complex and persistent learning difficulties. The majority are White British but a significant minority is from Asian or Asian British Pakistani families. There is a largely stable staff, many of whom live in the local area and have worked at the school for a number of years.
Aspects of practice	The school is co-located on a site with a mainstream secondary school; which was built as one of the earliest Building Schools for the Future (BSF) projects. As part of the BSF programme the school made the decision to include a high specification multimedia suite in their requirements. This arose partly out of the work that they had done with a creative practitioner in the school's Creative Partnerships programme. This suite is now fully equipped with assistive and media technologies that enable students to be involved in the production of media texts and musical performances. The school was also awarded a cognition and learning specialism.
Official school ethos	Senior managers are keen to stress the notion of 'disciplined innovative' which they feel describes the way they approach everything - a phrase which highlights tensions between standards and targets on the one hand and creativity and experimentation on the other.
	School rules are just 5 words that staff feel sum up their ethos- 'smile, share, friendly, help and care'.

Creative Partnerships at Matisse

Creative Partnerships status

The school was involved with Creative Partnerships for two years as a lead school in the region and then for a further year as a Change school. In their final year as a Change school they were encouraged to apply for School of Creativity status as the (then) regional office felt that they were the school in the region with the best chance of fulfilling the School of Creativity criteria. Unfortunately their application was not successful and so the school was no longer involved with Creative Partnerships when the research was conducted.

History of Creative Partnerships work

Staff in the school talk about the 'seamless connection' between their specialist school status (a cognition and learning specialism) and their creative work. The specialist school trust have provided

money for new technologies where Creative Partnerships has helped to provide the resources to make it possible for staff to use the technology effectively with the young people. This innovative use of cutting edge technologies at Matisse is seen as something that sets it apart from other schools that might possess similar technologies but often do not use them, or not very well. Senior managers believe that the CPD provided by creative media practitioners has been central to the success of the media work at Matisse.

Senior managers also feel that Creative Partnerships has brought a more creative approach to CPD to the school which is now seen as operating in a variety of forms, including traditional courses but also as ongoing processes of staff development as they work with creative practitioners and others. In fact, although no longer a Creative Partnerships funded school, senior managers describe a 'substantive affiliation' with its 'values' (see Thomson et al, 2009). For example, its paperwork was seen as supporting the school's journey as it linked effectively with demands placed on them from other initiatives and seemed to require 'sensible reflection and evaluation processes' (Deputy Head and Creative Partnerships coordinator). It was felt that the language of the forms was supportive and engaging and chimed with how the school tended to talk about their practice.

Creative Practitioner involvement

- three creative practitioners to work part-time at the school
- a creative media professional (who helped them to create specifications for the multimedia suite) currently works two days a week at Matisse, running projects with students and teachers and also running CPD for staff.   She has fully trained up two teaching assistants who now work permanently in the multimedia suite, offering teachers support in using the suite but also in taking out the equipment into the school.
- an assistive technologies expert and sound artist/musician who works one day a week with specific groups and has helped them to 'push boundaries' in enabling young people to use sound beams and other assistive technologies to make sound/ music.
- a musician and composer

Creative work 2009-1010

- The musician and composer worked alongside teachers and the assistive technologies practitioner to run the Rawchestra project which encouraged students from the co-located mainstream school to work alongside young people from Matisse and teachers from both schools.
- The creative media professional worked with teachers to design creative learning projects including a making short films and stop frame animation. She also ran staff training and development sessions and a pupil media crew
- The assistive technologies practitioner also helped a science teacher to develop an 'immersive' rainforest environment in his science classroom and supported the ongoing development of other specialist rooms within
  the school, such as the 'rebound' room

Striking aspects of the school's ethos

In summary

- 'creative' approaches via new media enable students to be experts – new identities

- increased range of provision through new and multi-media technologies – the young people's increasing ggexpertise with technologies has also given them a space in which they can participate on a similar (or higher) level to other young people, which is often harder in more traditional academic arenas. They can also be recognized for their innovative and competent work outside the school environment:

  One teacher describes a project where he invited local college students in to work with them on some filming and that they were then invited back to the college to reciprocate. The students were interacting with media professionals as well as each other. In this setting the young people from Matisse were seen by others as competent young people able to interact in a community/ work setting because they have a similar level of technical skills and the confidence to use them effectively.

  <div align="right">Field notes March 2010</div>

- connections to world outside – through creative practitioners as the school as a whole is now much more likely to invite people into the school from outside; working with their creative agent helped them to realize the potential and to learn about the practicalities of bringing people into school, as well as supporting them to be clear what they wanted from these adults. They have gone on to build partnerships with a variety of other schools and other external organisations within the creative industries.

- bringing students' out of school interests into school eg utilising media forms such as scratching, mash ups and video games in their lessons.

- awareness of environment eg striking, spacious layout of school

- supportive relationships between students – eg through working together on joint creative production tasks, and in putting together performances, young people have developed a sense of mutuality and a generosity towards each other that is demonstrated when they encourage and congratulate each other on their work. In a student focus group young people said that 'using kind words' and 'having respect for others' were important features of their school identities. In our observations, too, students offered each other support, praise and encouragement - there was often spontaneous applause when someone achieved something in a lesson that they had found difficult.

- stable staff body

- joint projects where both staff and students are sometimes positioned as 'learners' eg Rawchestra project – anyone can join in regardless of their musical ability as the focus is on expression and improvisation rather than performance and many of the teachers involved are inexperienced musicians

- staff able to draw on their outside-school interests eg musician who now works with Creative Practitioners.

- long-term partnerships between teachers and practitioners who are professionals and have high expectations.

- commitment to CPD

- The 'high quality' multimedia productions that students create have enabled the school to celebrate success more effectively – highly competent and polished PowerPoint presentations, films and audio are shown both to audiences of parents and also further afield. Staff believe that these productions have helped to challenge pre-conceived ideas about young people with disabilities, provided staff with 'compelling evidence of what they do of a high quality,' and enabled young people to feel a sense of pride and confidence in their own abilities to speak to a wider audience. An external consultant working with the school described the 'wow moments' that's he's observed 'when a young person does something you never thought they could do or when young people come together to achieve something.'

Sherman RC High School

School Context

Location	Large northern city, suburban location
Age range	11-16
No. on roll	750 approx
School population	The vast majority of students are White British; a small and increasing number of students come from a diverse range of minority ethnic backgrounds. Attainment on entry is above average. The number of students eligible for free school meals is lower than average. The number of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is also lower than average as is the number of students with statements of special educational needs.
	There is a very stable staff, many of whom have worked at the school for a number of years and are committed to staying on at the school.
Aspects of practice	The school has been a specialist technology college for the last nine years and gained a second specialism in applied learning in 2007. Corridors generally feel safe and movement between classes is orderly, classrooms are places of learning and discussion and there are few discipline concerns.
Official school ethos	Sherman's mission statement reflects the Catholic nature of the school and stresses recognition and respect for each other as well as fostering caring relationships and inclusion. Creative approaches are seen as a way that these aims can be achieved, this is often associated with Christianity and specifically the notion of forgiveness and confidence to make mistakes. The head teacher suggests:
	'It's the sort of people the students become, whatever their ability, to have high self esteem to be valued for who they are not what they've achieved and that they make a worthwhile contribution to the society that they live in and that they're confident to make that contribution.'

Sherman and Creative Partnerships

Creative Partnerships Status: School of Creativity

History of Creative Partnerships work

Sherman has been a Creative Partnerships school for the last three years. However the head eacher suggests that they have been on a journey towards adopting more creative approaches for the last 10 to 15 years. Much of the work at Sherman has been projects where artists have been brought in to work with teachers who have expressed an interest in redesigning their schemes of work or lessons in some way. For example the RE department last year completely rewrote all their lessons plans and

schemes of work after close work with a creative practitioner last year.

The Creative Partnerships co-ordinator in the school is also an assistant head and she leads on all the creative projects in the school. She is described by senior managers as a 'one off' in the way that she drives and manages the school's creative journey. She has developed close links with a range of large and community arts organizations across the city which enables the students to display their work and collaborate with creative professionals outside of school.

Creative Practitioner involvement

- A large local theatre company works with groups of young people each year
- Individual teachers 'bid' for the Creative Partnerships money and appoint practitioners to work on a curriculum focused topic with them and one year group.

Creative work 2009- 2010

- a large local theatre company worked with young people from Sherman and with their feeder primary schools.
- the school ran several small projects where creative practitioners worked closely with individual teachers to redesign and deliver schemes of work – one of these involved a head of year working with a creative practitioner and a group of Year 7 children on a project exploring the question, 'Are we happy?'.
- the school also conducted a 'creativity audit' to update the audit they conducted three years ago – to assess the understanding people in the school had of creative approaches.

Striking aspects of school ethos
In summary
- supportive relationships between students – getting on together

- respectful caring relationships between staff and students –the majority of young people and teachers feel cared for and comfortable: 'We're in no rush, we're chilled, it's a relaxed atmosphere' (Year 11 boy, student focus group, April 2010).

- students' capacity to self-manage their learning eg when teacher was absent young people engaged in peer assessment

- teacher interest and engagement with student ideas – genuine interest– young people say that 'If you disagree with a teacher there's always two sides and they'll encourage you to question what they say.'

- different spaces within the school and 'permission' to express emotion eg creative approaches were valued as they were seen to create a space where you could experiment with 'being somebody else' (for example in drama), but also 'just splodging paint around' could be a release valve and a way to make you feel better about yourself as well as how you're feeling,

  I think it helps you handle the situation better because you've got a place where you can let out anger and emotions and you can create something so if you're feeling bad

about yourself and you can produce something really wonderful it can help you feel better and it can help you express your thoughts about a situation.

(Year 9 girl, student focus group, April 2010).

- sense of being able to rely on others

- wide range of provision eg a wide variety of ways in which young people can participate

- connections beyond the school, to wider audiences for student work eg student work is often displayed in local gallery spaces

- commitment to CPD

- stable staff

- Sherman provides a safe environment where people are clear about boundaries, respect each other and feel generally content. From this position of security some students have suggested that they feel able to make mistakes, and express their emotions and beliefs without fear of reprisals.

Warhol School

School Context

Location	Large Midlands city,
Age range	11-16
No. on roll	835 approx
School population	The majority of students are Pakistani. There is a minority in almost equal numbers of Bangladeshi and Black African of whom the latter comprise a large proportion of Somali students, some of them new entrants to the country. The percentage of students who speak English as an additional language is well above the national average. A very high proportion of students are entitled to free school meals and there is a high percentage of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities. High teacher turnover.
Aspects of practice	Gained Specialist Humanities Status in 2006. The school is very proud of their explorations of diversity, through termly 'Diversity Days' where one country is chosen and a themed curriculum is developed by staff and outside practitioners to enable the whole school community to learn more about cultures represented in the school.
Official school ethos	The official ethos at Warhol suggests that the school values the diversity of their students and the community that they serve. Its mission statement includes the four words: 'humanity, equality, aspiration, respect.'

Creative Partnerships at Warhol

Creative Partnerships Status: Change School

History of Creative Partnerships

Warhol became a Change School in June 2008 and have been working on activities which bring artists in to work with small groups of teachers and young people. For example one of the projects involved a group of young people working on a project that explored their hopes for their own futures through textile work that was then placed around the school as a series of artistic interventions. The young people have formed a group called the 'Warhol youth panel' and the school's creative agent often calls on them to deliver presentations to groups outside of the school, for example at local CP events. A small group of teachers last year worked with an artist to plan and develop a 'global garden' area in the school grounds and to think about a scheme of work to engage students in some learning outdoors.

The Creative Partnerships co-ordinator in the school is an advanced skills art teacher who is in her second year at the school. This year the Change school programme is continuing the work with the Warhol youth panel who are working in partnership with teachers to plan the diversity days as well as on an additional curriculum based project that aims to embed 'creativity and diversity' more

effectively across the curriculum. A small group of teachers, one from each department, is also working with an artist to plan and develop a scheme of work for the new themed curriculum in Year 7. Work with teachers has been identified as particularly important as the CP co-ordinator is committed to ensuring that creative approaches become more embedded across the school.

The CP co-ordinator is also keen to develop a 'making room' in the school and the head teacher is exploring the possibility of installing a log cabin somewhere in the grounds as LEA money for portacabins has not been sufficient for their needs.

Creative Practitioner involvement

- A textile artist works with a small group of young people (known as the Warhol youth panel)
- An environmental artist works with a small group of teachers

Creative work 2009-1010

- The textile artist worked with the Warhol youth panel on a project called, Creative Clinic. The young people met once a week for around 12 weeks to plan a short INSET activity for the whole staff. They experimented and prepared a range of creative activities that they felt teachers could adopt in their own lessons
- The environmental artist worked with a small group of teachers to plan and deliver a series of lessons using creative approaches and in particular involving the 'global garden' area that the artist had worked on in the previous academic year, with another group of teachers.

Striking aspects of the school's ethos

Warhol school has seen rapid change and improvement over the last six years in terms of exam success. However the school still faces many challenges, such as teacher stress and a high turnover of staff, as do many schools serving communities living in poverty. In observations and in conversation with teachers and young people we found that Warhol still faces considerable challenges and there are clear disjunctures between their official ethos and practice in the school.

In summary, the school's general ethos involves:
- poor relationships between teachers and students and between students eg teachers shouting at a group rather than conversations with individuals. We observed students boo-ing each others performances in a whole school assembly
- lack of structure to the school day and a sense of chaos and overcrowding in corridors outside lesson times – timetable constantly changes, lunchtimes are variable
- lack of attention to the environment as students experience it eg smelly toilets
- constrained and limited identities – staff constantly police student uniforms and bodily comportment, students feel that 'creative' identities are too risky
- little attempt to build on students' out of school interests and abilities, even on Diversity Days
- lack of recognition – displays on walls rarely change, do not reflect students' work
- 'creative' teaching and learning regarded as a privilege (which can be withdrawn)
- little collaboration between staff; 'dead' feel to staffroom though staff find support in small 'likeminded' groups within staff body
- unstable staff, high turnover, reliance on 'Teach First' graduates who move on

- lack of responsibility-taking – students are seen (by students as well as adults) as damaging the school, but staff are also accused of leaving mess in staff room
- many places where students are not allowed to go
- students lack belief in themselves or others
- focus on examinations, which has enabled improved results but students narrated how in assemblies they would be repeatedly told about improved grades achieved by other students; whilst they realized this was intended to encourage them, it nonetheless seemed to offer external rather than intrinsic motivation
- problem with teacher stress leading to high turnover of staff – many inexperienced staff also leads here to a focus on more punitive discipline techniques

Creative Partnerships projects in this school may be all the more important for staff and students alike, and in bringing about change, both for students who value them and for teachers who find thereby a better way of relating to students because they offer:

- respectful relationships between adults and students

- small group work, recognition

- supportive relationships between students in the group – students generally work in small groups and say that this and creative approaches are about 'not being afraid' and having choice about how to produce their own work.

- praise and appreciation of students' contribution

- teachers working on cross curricular projects

- wider provision eg projects that allowed young people to be successful in an arena that was not necessarily academic

- contexts for experimentation eg students experimenting with identities, staffdonning pink gloves and badges in creative workshops, staff experimenting with different relationships with young people in youth panel led INSETs

- attention and sensitivity to the environment – eg new wall murals, global garden

Extract from field notes
The creative practitioner has put a piece of wallpaper on the table behind the large desk we are sitting around. She has done 'clouds' for 'name, skills, achievements, hobbies' and she encourages the [Y7] boys to come up and write something about themselves for each 'bubble'. She wants them to transfer this onto luggage tags (made from photocopied fabric) and then attach it to their sculpture. They are all happy to write their names and something about their skills- football, maths – but less keen to write something about their 'personality'. The creative practitioner challenges them to do this, though, and gets some of them thinking. Someone writes 'energetic' on the personality cloud- the creative practitioner comments what a great word this is. As she is trying to encourage them to think about their personality words (3 or 4 of them are gathered around the wallpaper paper at this point) one of them says, "Miss I have no personality'. The creative practitioner isn't fazed by this and asks

him to think about what other people might say about him- your friends, your family? She also suggests lots of words that might be useful.

Before packing up the creative practitioner gathers all the work together for them to look at and talk about- she praises everyone and says how hard they've worked. The creative practitioner has an appreciative manner with the young people, who all seemed to feel relaxed during the session in which she created a calm, purposeful space within what seemed to be a chaotic day for them.

Field notes, February 2010

First session with an 'inclusion' group and creative practitioner