



Creative Partnerships

This much we know...

Creative Partnerships: approach and impact

What is Creative Partnerships?

Creative Partnerships is the Government's flagship creativity programme for schools and young people, managed by Arts Council England and funded by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) with an additional support from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES).

It aims to develop:

- the creativity of young people, raising their aspirations and achievements
 - the skills of teachers and their ability to work with creative practitioners
 - schools' approaches to culture, creativity and partnership working; and
 - the skills, capacity and sustainability of the creative industries.
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"Far from aligning with an externally imposed agenda, you have an internally derived agenda with external support and interest... As a school, you then have a new pair of eyes, a different imagination working with you, shaping ideas together, challenging your thinking, helping to drive the process and making new links."

Enid Fraser,
Head teacher, Parkview
School, Barrow-in-Furness

"The project is opening up questions about some of the assumptions we make about how to organise and orchestrate learning. Suited and Booted have got the children to come up with some excellent ideas and the direction of the project seems to evolve continuously."

Roland Lovatt, Deputy Head,
Elmlea Junior School, Bristol

"The curriculum is extensively enriched through the school's Creative Partnerships, which contribute positively to pupils' social development... There is evidence that more innovative learning strategies are developing as the project impacts positively on the effectiveness of teaching."

Ofsted report for Islington Arts
& Media School, March 2004

Creative Partnerships focuses on the most deprived communities in England.

The programme achieves its aims by nurturing the creativity of learners and educators, and developing creative approaches to teaching all aspects of the curriculum.

Creative Partnerships enables headteachers to realise their personal vision for a school, freeing them up to innovate and succeed. It encourages an approach designed around the needs of the individual school, with learning tailored to the needs and aspirations of each child.

Creative Partnerships enables schools to work with creative practitioners to develop a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum. It does so by supporting a range of creative practitioners to work in partnership with schools in long term sustained relationships.

This paper gives a broad outline of our approach and impact so far. It cannot hope to capture the diverse range of projects, approaches and outcomes flowing from our schools. For examples of projects, and full evaluation reports, visit www.creative-partnerships.com

Why creativity?

Creativity develops the capacity to imagine the world differently. We all need an ability not just to cope with change, but also positively to thrive on it and engineer it for ourselves. Therefore, young people need the tools to conceptualise how the world could be different, and the inner confidence and motivation to make it happen. They need to be able to take risks and fail confidently. To do this, young people need to enjoy learning, know how to seek out relevant information, apply knowledge and skills in new and imaginative ways and try out ideas in real-world situations where they can observe real outcomes and receive generative critical feedback.

It is a process developed, in the Creative Partnerships programme, through young people, teachers and creative professionals collaborating toward flexible outcomes. We understand that creativity is not simply about 'doing the arts' – it is about questioning, making connections, inventing and reinventing, about flexing the imaginative muscles. We do believe, however, that working with creative professionals from many different artforms and disciplines helps develop creative thinking, as these processes are central to the work of such practitioners.

How does Creative Partnerships operate?

Creative Partnerships begins with the needs of young people and their schools. It does not offer pre-packaged solutions, although it has a wealth of experience on which to draw. Instead, it brings resources and expertise.

Creative Partnerships starts with the School Improvement Plan, which lays out the major priorities of each school. Sometimes it will help a school develop its plan, in other cases it will take aspects of the plan and work with the school to develop projects which address the issues identified. One project may address the poor speaking and listening skills in a primary school's reception class. Another may explore how the geography curriculum can be made more attractive to young people at key stage 3. There are projects which have focussed entirely on re-engaging a small group of disaffected boys in Year 11, whose behaviour is affecting the aspiration and performance of the whole year.

In all cases, Creative Partnerships will ensure that teachers have the opportunity to plan in depth and, where necessary, the time and resources to undertake further research. Working with the school, Creative Partnerships will identify appropriate creative practitioners and recruit them to work on the project. It will provide training to both teaching staff and creative practitioners to prepare them for working together.

Once the project is completed, Creative Partnerships encourages thoughtful evaluation and reflection, and will use the experience to revisit the School Improvement Plan. Often it will trigger changes to the plan as new priorities emerge from the experience.

Inevitably, this process generates new ideas, projects and approaches, each more ambitious than the last. Again, careful planning, research, training and the identification of appropriate practitioners take place. At this level, projects may include a primary school creating a curriculum around a single theme engaging every child and teacher for a whole year, or a secondary school collapsing its entire curriculum for Year 7 into a single subject over which the English, History, Languages, Maths, Science and Art teachers collaborate to generate and deliver a coherent multi-layered curriculum.

At the heart of this process lie long-term relationships between lead creative practitioners and schools. Creative practitioners bring a new approach. They have different expectations of young people and when these are set high, the children rise to the challenge, frequently to the astonishment of their teachers. They bring a different language and a different practice, which stretches and challenges the teaching staff and young people. The creative practitioners also derive great benefit. They too are challenged, encouraged to develop new practices and exposed to new voices and different world views. Their personal practice is enriched.

"This experience has renewed my faith in working with schools and teachers – of the potential and impact of creative learning delivered through meaningful partnerships. It's afforded me the opportunity to really reflect upon my practice, and to gain a much greater understanding of the challenges and issues in schools. We will all be taking this learning back to other organisations with whom we work."

Graham Urlwin,
Artist and consultant,
Manchester and Salford

"The resources are well targeted and teachers have picked up lots of ideas. It's nice to make contact on our home ground rather than to have to go to these organisations. Teachers are more aware of what these creative partners have to offer and will be in touch in the future."

Sue Kerwin,
Deputy Head,
St. Malachy's Roman Catholic
Primary School, Liverpool

"Very strong links with the local community, including work with 'Creative Partnerships', have a very strong influence on developing pupils' excellent perceptions of what it means to be part of a community, both within the school and outside."

Ofsted report on Gallions
Mount Primary School,
Greenwich, 2005

“It has been a revelation to me that I can work with someone with such complementary expertise and how much this extends what together we are able to offer students.”
Secondary school teacher,
Derbyshire

“The involvement of the ‘Creative Partnerships’ project in the school has had a very positive influence on the breadth of the curriculum... [it] has also acted as a stimulus for the school’s increasing use of cross-curricular links between subjects... This is beginning to give pupils more opportunities to develop their speaking, listening and communication skills in wider contexts than just literacy and humanities.”
Ofsted report, Teyfant
Community School,
Bristol 2005

“Membership of a Creative Partnership initiative has enabled the school to critically evaluate curriculum provision and to take positive action... Effective whole-school training has enabled teachers to evaluate how pupils learn, resulting in the introduction of many new teaching strategies to enhance and accelerate learning. Whilst relatively new, the impact of this initiative can already be seen in pupils’ learning, particularly in their speaking and thinking skills.”
Ofsted report, Alderman
Cogan’s Cof E Primary
School, Hull, 2004

What has Creative Partnerships delivered so far?

Creative Partnerships now operates in 36 areas in England and is working intensively with around 1,100 schools. It has delivered projects to young people or continuing professional development (CPD) to teachers in a further 1,500 schools and disseminated best practice to a further 8,000, so that over one third of schools in England have had some contact with the programme. Creative Partnerships has worked with 575,000 young people and 70,000 teachers, provided training to over 36,500 teachers and creative practitioners, and has employed over 4,800 creative practitioners and cultural organisations.

Research by the Burns Owen Partnership has shown that while the impact of the programme is largely felt in the education sector, over 70% of all Creative Partnerships expenditure is on creative practitioners and cultural organisations. By 2008, this will amount to almost £100 million (since the programme began in 2002).

Does it work?

In 2005, in order to gain a rounded picture of our impact so far, complementing existing local research and evaluation processes, Creative Partnerships commissioned four pieces of independent research.

NFER pupil tracking survey

In February 2006, the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) completed a study of 13,000 young people who had participated in Creative Partnerships activities. NFER found that:

“Young people known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities out-performed those in the same schools (but not known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities) to a statistically significant extent at all three key stages. This was evident in average scores, English, mathematics and science in key stages 2 and 3 and in total points scores, best 8 points scores and science at key stage 4.” (NFER conclusions p22 para 5.3)

In addition, young people who have participated in Creative Partnerships activities out-perform the national average at key stage 3 again by a statistically significant margin, while matching the national average at key stages 2 and 4. Since Creative Partnerships is focused on improving education in the most challenged communities in England, this is a highly significant result.

BMRB survey of headteachers

These findings are strongly supported by an independent survey of headteachers conducted by British Market Research Bureau (BMRB) and completed in April 2006. BMRB spoke to 510 (78%) of headteachers from phase one and two areas, to assess their perception of the impact of Creative Partnerships. This revealed that:

- 92% have seen an improvement in pupils' confidence
- 91% have seen an improvement in pupils' communication skills
- 87% have seen an improvement in pupils' motivation.

Secondary schools have reported that:

- 80% have seen an improvement in pupils' enjoyment of school
- 78% have seen an increase in pupils' ability to learn independently
- 70% have seen an improvement in pupils' behaviour.

As a consequence, schools are seeing improvements in young people's achievement:

- 79% felt that Creative Partnerships has made a real contribution to raising educational standards in the school
- 79% felt that Creative Partnerships has improved attainment at the school
- 78% felt that being involved with Creative Partnerships has led to a stronger focus on student progress beyond simple exam results.

The independent survey of headteachers conducted by BMRB also shows that:

- 94% have seen an improvement in teaching skills
- 92% can see their teachers being more effective in using creative professionals in the classroom
- 92% can see that their teachers are more willing to take a creative approach.

Burns Owens Partnership report on the impact of Creative Partnerships on the creative and cultural economy.

An independent study by the Burns Owens Partnership has shown that Creative Partnerships is having a significant impact on the development of individual creative practitioners:

“Creative Partnerships has nurtured a pool of practitioners and creative agents that are highly skilled, with a strong understanding of the education market. Creative Partnerships has provided these practitioners and agents with unique CPD opportunities that will not only support engagement with the education market, but are highly transferable across public and commercial sectors.” (p.29)

“Participation in Creative Partnerships is seen as a key contributor to the marked improvements in the school's SATS results. Creative Partnerships has provided me with the time and opportunity to work with my staff to develop new approaches to teaching and learning across the school.”

Head Teacher, Barmston Primary School, Durham

“The quality of work that has come from the school's link with Creative Partnerships is truly amazing and a very special feature of life at Deansfield.”

Ofsted letter to pupils, Deansfield High School Wolverhampton, 2006

“The opportunity has enabled the pupils to experience, explore and discover a very wide range of media, as well as significantly improve their own skills and techniques. It has played a major role in the development of the school during a period of considerable change and development...The success is in the developing understanding and relationships between the school and its links with other schools and the artists themselves.”

Ofsted report on Paget Primary School, Birmingham, 2004

“The partnerships I now have, have made a huge difference to how I feel about myself and to what I am prepared and able to take on board. If we are able to transfer this different way of feeling to our children and give them real confidence, support and encouragement then we can really help our children learn and enjoy what they do at school and beyond.”

Kate Murray, Head Teacher, Oldbury Court Primary School, Bristol

“This project has been an important aspect of our school development plan, as we have placed ‘Creativity’ as one of the two central foci for our school development. Since embarking on this project we have significantly increased resources for cultural and creative activity from our own budget. In previous years, this allocation was between £100 and £200, this year we have put in £6000.”

Helen MacFarlane, Head of Ludgvan School, Cornwall

“It has generated excitement at the possibilities for real change in the outlook in some of the hotspots of deprivation and has opened the minds of all to the need for creative activity at the core of the school, and in all subject areas.”

Tony Lyng,
Head Teacher, Brockhill
Performing Arts College

“All pupils are given outstanding learning opportunities and achieve very well. The strength of the curriculum is in its oversight and development by the headteacher. He has a very clear and exciting vision of an exemplary curriculum in which creativity is central to learning, the barriers between subjects are broken down and all pupils achieve very well. This philosophy has resulted in a highly successful collaboration with ‘Creative Partnerships’.”

Ofsted report on Stormont House School, Hackney 2005

35% of creative practitioners had been working for less than three years. This group derived the biggest benefits from Creative Partnerships in terms of new skills, confidence and CV enhancement. This is a highly significant finding because traditional government training programmes are more successful in reaching the longest established and biggest companies, than in reaching emerging companies and new professionals.

46% of creative practitioners had developed other work outside Creative Partnerships as a direct result of their involvement. The research uncovered the surprising extent to which funding by Creative Partnerships filtered out into the wider creative economy. 54% of creative practitioners employ others to work with them on Creative Partnerships work with 29% spending more than half their income from Creative Partnerships on employing other creative practitioners. Those surveyed had between them employed over 1,000 other creative practitioners. If this is typical of Creative Partnerships practice, then around 10,000 other creative practitioners will have been supported by Creative Partnerships.

Most importantly, Creative Partnerships was having a major impact on the development of the creative practitioners’ personal practice. 74% said Creative Partnerships offers more space and time for creative practice development than other forms of work, 66% felt that Creative Partnerships allows more risk-taking and 59% felt it had improved their creative practice.

On the basis of this research we estimate that approximately 70% of Creative Partnerships funding is spent on creative practitioners.

Ofsted inspection of Creative Partnerships

In Autumn 2005, the Minister for Culture, David Lammy, wrote to invite Ofsted to inspect Creative Partnerships. The inspection took place during the summer term of 2006, visiting a sample of 36 schools in six areas, and the report was published at the end of September 2006.

Ofsted inspectors reported that they had seen evidence of significant improvements in the basic learning skills of young people who had participated in Creative Partnerships activities:

“Improvements in literacy, particularly writing, and speaking were significant in the majority of schools visited... Developing and applying mathematical skills in context was also an indicator of pupils’ achievement which several schools identified... Pupils used information and communications technology (ICT) effectively to research, explore, develop and model ideas in and across different subjects.” (p.12)

They also found that the projects had provided rich sources of inspiration for young people to talk or write about and there were clear gains in their self-confidence and articulacy.

Ofsted inspectors also found improvements in the creative skills of the young people they visited:

“Most Creative Partnerships programmes were effective in developing in pupils some attributes of creative people: an ability to improvise, take risks, show resilience, and collaborate with others. Creative practitioners, teachers and support staff clearly valued these as skills for pupils to develop and apply in order to express their own creativity. The majority of pupils interviewed knew these qualities were considered important.” (p.5)

The development of these skills contributes significantly to improvements in the overall approach of young people to education:

“Often the outcomes of programmes could be seen in changed attitudes and behaviours, and the demonstration of creative approaches to work. This represents a significant achievement; it included teachers who previously lacked belief in their own creativity and ability to inspire creativity in others, and pupils who were previously unconvinced by approaches to learning or the value of education... For some pupils their involvement in Creative Partnerships proved a turning point; good attendance and participation in learning continued beyond the project. In a small but significant proportion of schools, improvements in pupils’ attitudes and behaviour during projects signalled the start of a return to schooling.” (p.4)

Inspectors also found that Creative Partnerships programmes were contributing to all five of the Every Child Matters outcomes:

“Convincing evidence was provided in all Creative Partnerships areas about the contribution of the programmes to Every Child Matters outcomes. The vast majority of pupils directly involved enjoyed their education in and through Creative Partnerships; good behaviour, cooperation, enthusiasm and pride were common outcomes. Skills that were consistently improved – literacy, numeracy, ICT, self-confidence, team-working, an ability to show enterprise and handle change – are likely to contribute to pupils’ future economic well-being. The nature of particular initiatives enabled some pupils to develop good regard for the safety and well-being of others; they showed high levels of responsibility in potentially high risk situations such as handling different materials. In a smaller proportion of projects, pupils showed that they could manage personal stress, contributing to a healthy lifestyle. Opportunities for pupils to make a positive contribution to the community through Creative Partnerships programmes were valued by pupils; in community-based projects, pupils displayed high levels of social responsibility.” (p.11)

Ofsted also provided some useful recommendations for schools, local authorities, the programme itself and Government, to ensure that the impact of the programme is maximised.

The findings of the Ofsted inspection corroborate the findings of the earlier studies, confirming that Creative Partnerships is delivering improvements in the aspiration and achievements of young people, in the skills and creativity of teachers and in developing the creative industries.

“The school is now a leading establishment in showcasing what can be achieved through such creative partnerships.”
Ofsted report, Birkdale Primary School, Southport, 2006

“The project does not stop here. A particular feature has been a major curriculum shift towards a more topic-based approach to teaching. This way of working will carry on, as it carries within it a model of teaching and learning that is motivating and enjoyable for both teacher and child.”
Jacqueline Bruton-Simmonds, Headteacher, Jubilee Primary School, Hackney

“Partnerships are key to unlocking creativity.”
Lord Adonis on the Creative Partnerships CARA programme

What next?

“There is a need to construct a more coherent ‘creativity offer’, which is then actively managed/brokered into the new context of school and personal autonomy.” Paul Roberts, DCMS/DfES Creativity Review, 2006.

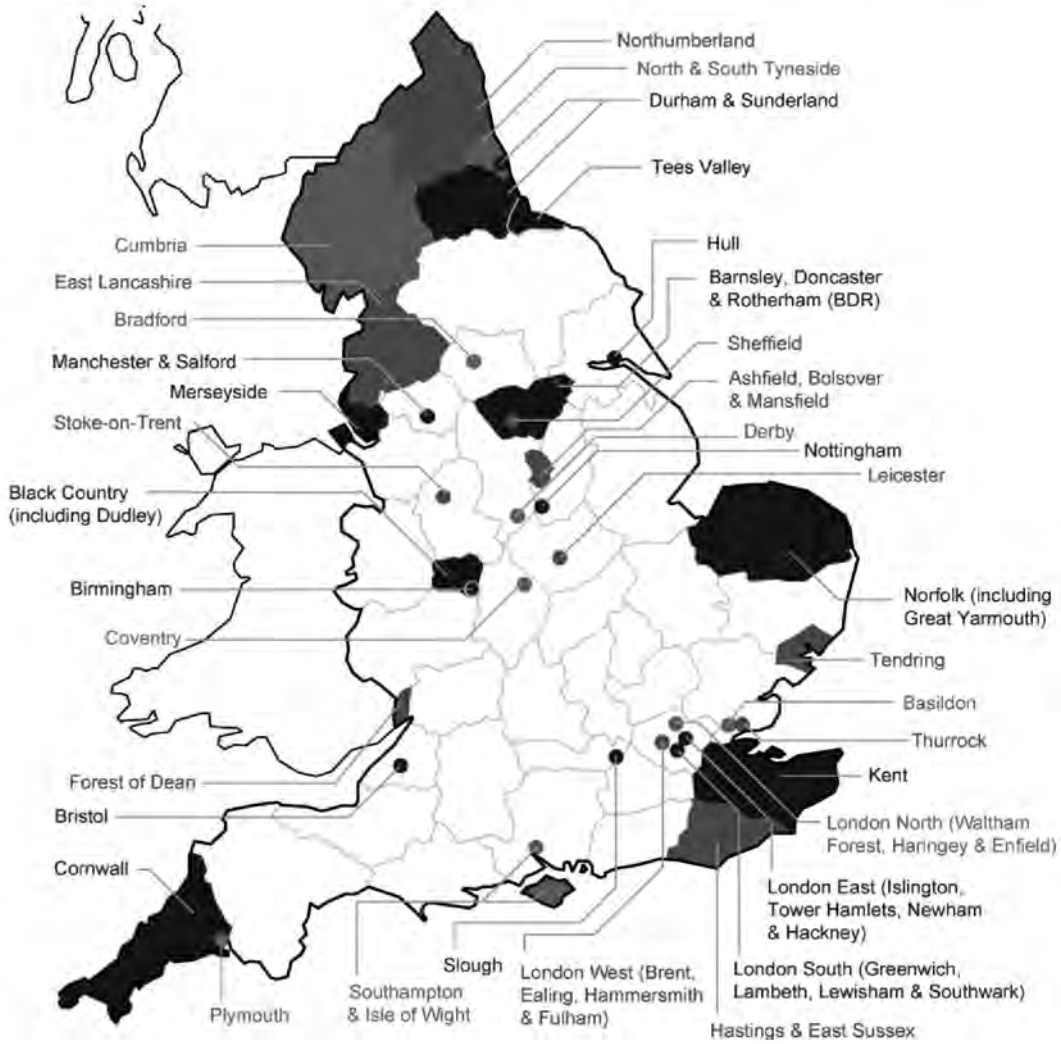
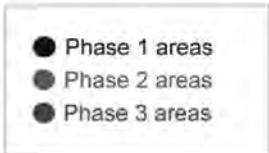
Creative Partnerships is currently planning for its future beyond 2008. Our early thinking is that our future development should aim for:

- An increased reach, serving more young people, schools and areas, but still deprivation-focused
- A national force for change, led by schools and partners who are recognised as ‘agents of change’ within the education system
- A widened remit, moving beyond 5-16 into early years and further education and beyond the cultural sector to a wider range of external partners
- Pupils as equal partners in the development, delivery and evaluation of the programme
- A national guidance service to support all schools wishing to deepen and broaden their cultural and creative offer
- A more diverse funding regime, leveraging resources from the education, cultural and business sectors.

Please contact us if you would like to engage in discussions about our future.

Paul Collard, National Director, Creative Partnerships.

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Note: Most Phase 1 areas office teams began working in schools in 2002-03.
Phase 2 areas began in 2004-05.
Phase 3 areas began in 2005-06.

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You can get this publication in Braille, in large print, on audio CD and in electronic formats. Please contact us if you need any of these formats.

Printed by Beacon Press.
Design by www.luminous.co.uk

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ISBN number
0-7287-1320-9 978-0-7287-1320-8