

CREATIVE *writing*
THROUGH  THE  ARTS

Summary Report
2018-2019 School Year



2018-2019 Creative Writing through the Arts Project Summary Report

Funders:

Paul Hamlyn Foundation is the major funder 2016 to 2019 through its 'More and Better' fund. The programme also benefits from additional matched co-investment by participating schools and the Royal Opera House Bridge.

Participating Teachers and Schools (Cohort Three):

Chadwell St Mary Primary School	Katie Cullender
Cherry Tree Primary School	Tamar Button
Eastwood Primary School and Nursery	Stephanie Leak
Edwards Hall Primary School	Jessica Levy
Elmwood Primary School	Helen Beadle
Heycroft Primary School	Hannah Whitbourn
Hilltop Junior School	Debbie Lawless
Noak Bridge Primary School	Richie Lloyd
Northwick Park Primary Academy	Victoria Gardener
Rochford Primary School	Claire Chapman
Tilbury Pioneer Academy	Megan Godfrey
Warren Primary School	Laura Lewis
Waterman Primary School	Tracey Lincoln
Westerings Primary Academy	Billie Smith
Woodside Academy	Casey Jackson

Project Steering Group

Sally Manser and Roxie Curry (Royal Opera House Bridge); Sarah Goldsmith (Project Manager); Lyn Corderoy (Head teacher, Grange Primary School); Louise Lawton (Wickford TSA); Kath Sansom (Head teacher – Wyburns Primary School); Paulette Luff, Geraldine Davis (until December 2017) and Drew Quayle (from January 2018) (Anglia Ruskin University).

Research team:

Paulette Luff, Geraldine Davis (until December 2017), Faye Acton (until September 2018), Alison Feist, Mallika Kanyal, Louise Newley and Drew Quayle, with support from Anna Luff and Louise Newley, School of Education and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University, Chelmsford, UK.

Report authors:

Paulette Luff, Alison Feist, Mallika Kanyal, Louise Newley and Drew Quayle, School of Education and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University, UK.

Full report:

The full end of year report for this third year of the project, prepared by Anglia Ruskin University, is available on request and from the project website.

Findings from this year have been analysed together with findings from the 2016-17 and 2018-19 school years and the final Creative Writing through the Arts project report is also now available.

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The programme:

The aim of the Creative Writing through the Arts programme is to promote children's creative writing skills through integration of writing with art, dance, drama, film and music and visual art activities in primary school classrooms (from Foundation Stage to Year Six).

In the 2018-2019 school year sixteen primary schools from five Teaching Schools Alliances in South Essex joined the programme and took part throughout the year. Each school identified a class teacher to participate in specific professional development activities across the year. Creative practitioners provided full day 'inspiration' workshops for the cohort of teachers. These were:

- Sonia Hyams and Ross Bolwell-Williams, from Emergency Exit Arts <http://www.eea.org.uk/>
- Beth Higham Edwards for Music (Spring term) <https://www.bethhighamedwards.com/>
- Meera Chauda for Art (Summer term) <https://www.axisweb.org/p/meerachauda/>

Each of the arts workshops gave teachers the opportunity to try out, discuss and reflect upon a range of practical activities and teaching and learning strategies that they could adapt to use in their work with pupils of different ages. The workshops were followed up by mentoring visits within schools, by the artists, and meetings of groups of teachers with the creative practitioners, to support dialogues and the embedding of workshop ideas into teaching practice.

The research

Researchers from Anglia Ruskin University are undertaking the evaluation of the project. The teachers are co-researchers and they engaged in one full day event and termly twilight meetings to support the carrying out of action research to evaluate the implementation of the project in their classrooms. Children's participation and gaining their views about the arts activities and their writing, via listening to pupil voice is also a key aspect of the project, discussed at each twilight session. The teachers decided upon a main research question:

How and in what ways does high quality arts provision influence and inspire pupils and improve the quality of their writing?

Methods of collecting data:

- Each teacher identified nine children from her/his class and collected an initial sample of writing and one piece of writing in response to the creative work each term (four pieces of work per child in total). These were assessed independently by a writing consultant.
- Teachers used a variety of means to collect pupils' views about the project activities and their writing (supported by university researchers with expertise in children's participation).
- Teachers produced written narratives of their experiences each term.
- At each twilight meeting teachers gave a verbal update, shared evidence from their classrooms and reported on benefits of the project for children, themselves and the school.
- At a final celebration event, teachers displayed the outcomes of the project in their classroom and produced a summary poster to report their action research

In addition, as part of the evaluation:

- Head teachers completed a self-assessment tool at the beginning of the project, as a basis for reflection upon the opportunities for creative learning on offer in their school.
- Head teachers were interviewed in the final half term of the academic year to explore their experiences of the programme so far and creative learning on offer in their school.
- Teachers completed questionnaires at the beginning and end of the project year.

Voices from the project:

Children:

About drama and writing –

Year One class:

- *I like drama. It is very good.*
- *I like being Guy Fawkes' friend.*
- *I liked it when I got in jail.*
- *I like writing more when I do it after drama.*

Year Three class:

- *Drama is helpful as it can help you in your work, like, description in writing.*
- *I like drama because you can plan before you write.*
- *I feel very happy because our teacher let us write our names, like, who we are, like, a doctor, a scientist, etc.*
- *Drama helps with designing, like, you wanted to make something, you can act it out and that gives you more ideas.*

About music and writing –

Year Two class:

- *It helps us write. It makes us concentrate.*
- *Because of the sound you can hear sea and waves.*
- *It helps with punctuation.*
- *My favourite activity is writing a story. I would like to do more of it.*

Year Six class:

- *It gives you something to think about.*
- *Music helps get a better picture of setting a scene.*
- *Makes you want to write more - makes you feel as if it can go on for ever.*
- *I like doing Music and English because it mixes my two favourite subjects.*

About art and writing -

Year Five class:

- *It helps because we visualise what it would look like.*
- *I love writing description because I get to use my imagination.*
- *We are able to make and not remember everything. We can just look at it.*
- *I find it interesting to draw. It is fun. It's not boring like Maths and English. No, I actually like English.*

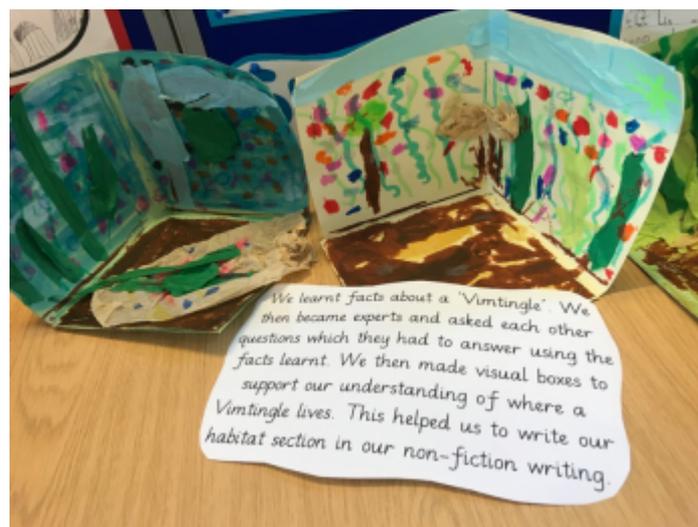


Teachers:

This project has enabled me to build on my professional development as a teacher. My confidence levels have increased and I now feel able to use creative strategies in my teaching to allow children to enjoy writing and deepen their understanding ... (Year One teacher)

To begin with, I was sceptical about how much impact it would have on children's learning but now I cannot believe the difference it has made to the children's writing and my own teaching. It has given me the confidence to deliver a broad, creative and interesting curriculum that immerses the children in their writing children have enjoyed what they have learned and constantly strive to improve their writing. (Year Two teacher)

One of the things that has resonated with me most has been Sonia's statement [drama practitioner] about taking a small element from a story, lighting the fuse of dynamite and blowing it up. Each of the art forms have taught us how to do this; a way of making the implicit explicit and drawing the children into a story so that they think, feel and breathe the text. I know that my class have been completely absorbed in each of the texts we've studied because of all the creative approaches that we have employed. (Year Five teacher)



Head Teachers:

We needed to make our curriculum broader and to balance and heighten the foundation subjects. By approaching creativity through the arts, we could raise the expectation of writing (a core subject) whilst at the same time raise expectation of the foundation subjects, so it was a double win for us ... It is very powerful CPD. It has made many of us think about how we approach writing, what we are asking our children to write about, how we motivate them.

The children, who were already an engaged and confident group have just gone from strength to strength. All children, including boys, girls, disadvantaged and SEND have an

assured and confident control over their writing. They see themselves as writers and are keen to contribute.

Children's writing:

Writing produced in response to arts activities showed the following positive characteristics:

Ideas

The written work inspired by creative arts is rich in imaginative ideas that are generated, developed and explored during drama, music and art activities. Children across the age and attainment range are enabled to write by having interesting experiences to write about.

Quantity

Children increased the quantity of their writing and the pace and fluency of their writing. They were motivated to write more, as they were keen to express their ideas and working through the arts aided recall and supported sustained, focused, in-depth writing.

Quality

The writing produced for the project was of high quality, in terms of structure, powerful use of language, wider vocabulary and rich, detailed descriptions of characters and settings and development of stories. Technical Accuracy is increased e.g. correct spelling of common words, phonetically plausible attempts at other spellings, correct use of capital letters, and accurate and consistent use of tenses.

Independent assessment of children's writing:

A literacy consultant evaluated writing samples from children in all classes (an initial sample of writing and one piece of writing in response to the creative work each term). Judgements were made based on the child's use of certain aspects of writing (structural devices, technical accuracy, literary devices, enthusiasm and presentational devices – see definitions below). Each of these aspects has been judged using a score of:

1. if the aspect of writing is not secure or there is little evidence of it within the text;
2. if the aspect of writing is generally secure and there is repeated evidence across the text;
3. if the writing shows secure use of the aspect and there is high evidence throughout the text.

These scores were then tallied and an average recorded. The graphs below have been calculated based on the mean average of all children's writing samples. The findings highlight differences in attainment on aspects of writing that can be linked with each arts stimulus.

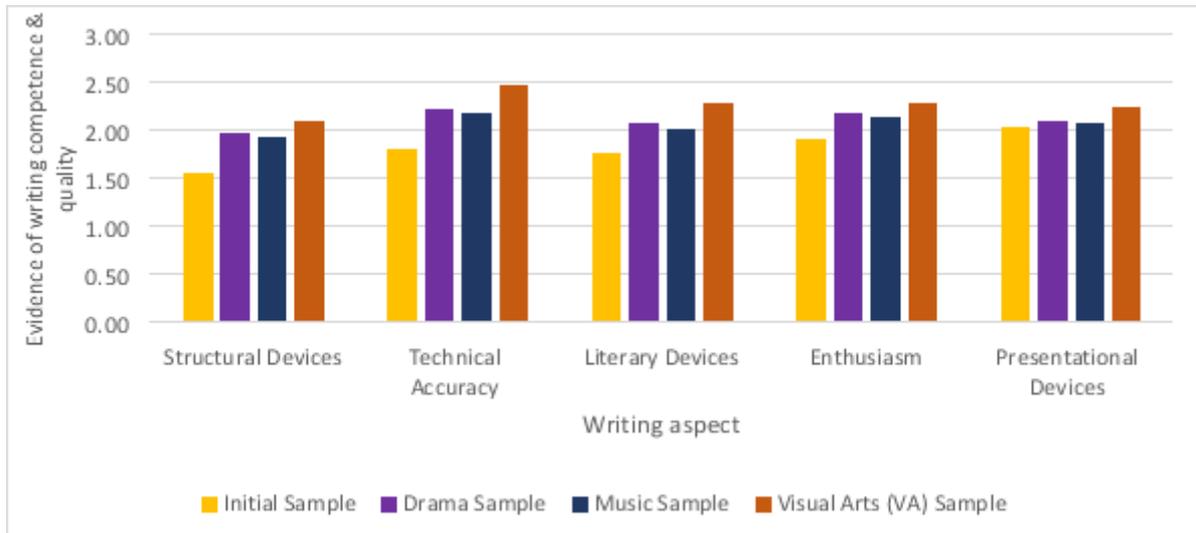
Aspect of writing:	Judged as:
Literary Devices	detail and description through expanded noun phrases, similes and metaphors; emphasis (alliteration, onomatopoeia); development of character and setting; use of rhetorical devices; foreshadowing; symbolism; established use of viewpoint and voice
Technical Accuracy	correct spelling of common words, phonetically plausible attempts at other spellings, correct use of capital letters, and accurate and consistent use of tenses.
Structural Devices	varied length and structure of sentences; use of appropriate sentence forms; variation of sentence starts for effect; use of conjunctions to extend/explain ideas; paragraphs developed around a theme; cohesive devices to link paragraphs; and use of speech (including idioms).
Enthusiasm	evidence of conscious engagement in writing process, maintenance of a style or genre throughout, evidence of empathy and range of vocabulary used, including technical vocabulary.

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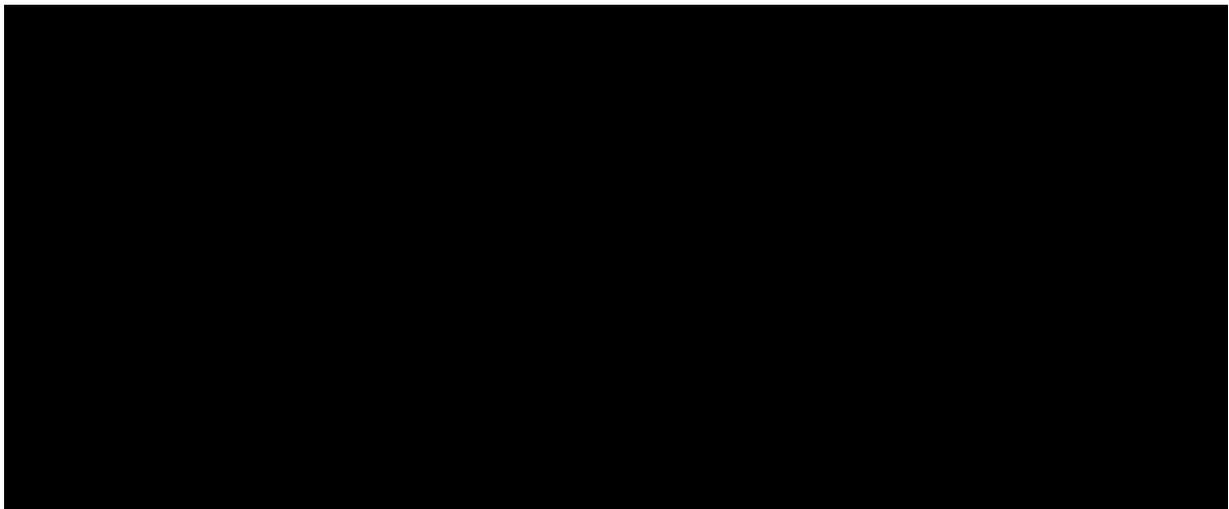
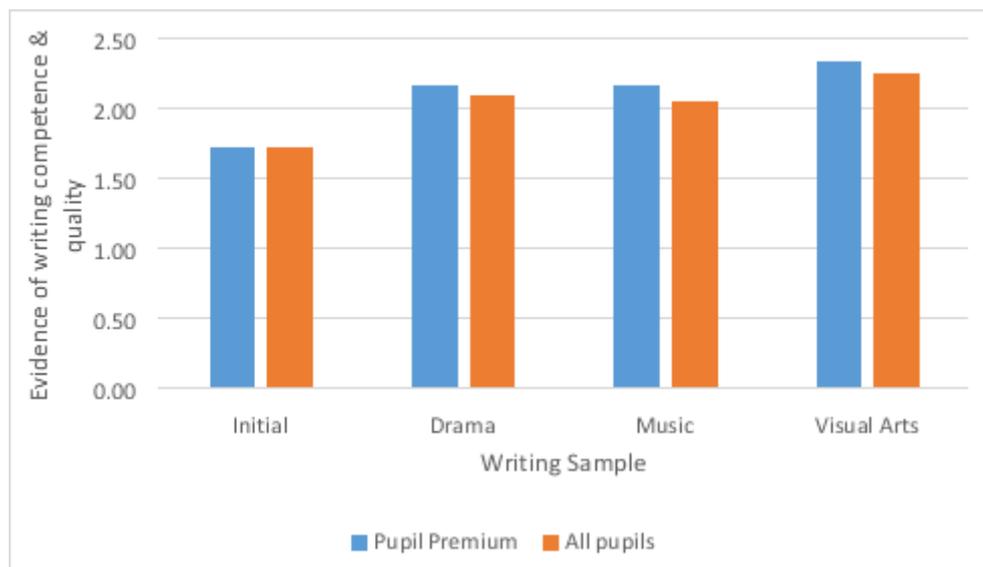
Presentational Devices

genre-specific devices such as diagrams and pictures, along with headings, sub-titles and labels. NB Due to these not always being relevant and present for all text types, these results are based on smaller datasets

Mean outcomes for each aspect of pupils writing from initial sample and art forms:



Comparison of mean outcomes for pupils identified as in receipt of pupil premium and the cohort:



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Additional findings from the project this year	
Children's learning	
Engaged	Children's enthusiasm for the arts based tasks shone through; active lessons provided a range of new, enjoyable experiences for the children that inspired them to learn and motivated them to write. Children grew in confidence and self-esteem. Children were positively disposed towards literacy lessons and writing and displayed signs of greater well-being within the classroom.
Inclusive	The arts based activities were engaging and accessible for all learners. Children with different talents could shine – and sometimes surprise their teachers. Activities without words broke down barriers for children for whom English is an additional language. Children with special needs and disabilities were inspired to participate and to achieve.
Collaborative	There was an increase in collaborative working, firstly in drama and then in music making and art. Children developed teamwork skills when sharing and building upon each other's ideas. This extended to writing via engagement in peer review, with children reflecting upon one another's writing, noting good points, supporting, and helping one another to improve.
Teachers	
Confident	Teachers' confidence in using different art forms in the classroom, for teaching literacy, increased through seeing the children deeply engaged in the arts activities and producing good quality writing. Understanding how the arts can enhance children's writing gave teachers the confidence to offer a broad, creative and immersive curriculum to promote writing.
Creative	Teachers acquired some fresh ideas and learned a variety of creative strategies that they integrated into their classroom practice. Teachers were emboldened to 'take more risks' and experiment with new ways of teaching, in order to engage children with powerful learning experiences. Teachers were also creative in weaving different art forms together to make cross-curricular links.
Inspired	Finding new ways of working led to excitement about teaching and 'renewed enthusiasm' for the profession. Having a bank of ideas, as a basis from which to plan engaging lessons, was highly valued. Teachers took pride in the children's development as creative thinkers and writers and are keen to take forward new understandings of how creative arts can be taught to support writing.
Schools	
Broad and balanced curriculum	A new Ofsted Inspection Framework is providing an opportunity for schools to implement richer approaches to learning and teaching; embracing cross-curricular activities and creative, integrated approaches to learning. The project has provided inspiration for integrating arts in curriculum policies and schemes for English, and for other subjects such as history and science.
Knowledge Sharing	Teachers are sharing their knowledge, expertise and experiences of arts for writing at many levels: with immediate colleagues, through a job share and within year groups and phases; across schools and year groups; across a Multi-AcademyTrust; and with other local schools. This is achieved through shared planning, team teaching, and leading staff meetings and training sessions.
Arts and cultural learning	Schools have used the project, and their Artsmark journey, to enrich creative and cultural learning. This includes local artists being invited into schools and visits inspired by the arts. Arts and artwork have been showcased for parents and members of the community. Local networks are beginning to form to make links to support further engagement with artists and the arts.