

# Yr 1 Case Study: Southglade Primary and Artist Graham Elstone

**Creativity**  
**Collaboratives**  
Nottingham



I had the pleasure of speaking with Emma Dowse from Southglade Primary school to hear about her experience in the Creativity Collaboratives project. Graham Elstone was their creative practitioner, who specialises in mixed media, sound installation and 3D art. Together, they aimed to use these creative elements to enrich the children's subject learning.

The Year 5 children's topic focus was history. With Graham, they were able to wonder how they could create a piece of art featuring a sound installation to represent a period in history for example the era of the Vikings. This approach made a welcome change to the usual knowledge-based curriculum delivery as the children were able to get stuck into a practical task, encouraging them to be inquisitive, curious and find out answers themselves rather than just be told the facts by their teacher. In the last few years, schools have suffered from closures and strict regulations due to the coronavirus pandemic, preventing children from having valuable opportunities to collaborate, so it was incredibly important that teamwork was also a skill developed during the residency. Although initially challenging, students were encouraged to work together in groups and with Graham, to give them a chance to collaborate and learn from one another. The success of the project is demonstrated in their beautiful interactive art installation display.

Emma told me the children that were involved in the project loved being part of it. **It gave them a chance to “explore their subject matter in a new way, get stuck into something practical based, interact with one another and gain responsibility.** They also developed problem solving skills, 3D skills and had opportunities to take risks in their work”. In addition to the children, the staff involved also learned new skills in design and technology, using different media and materials in the classroom and risk taking. It has supported teachers in finding new ways of teaching creatively.

The Creativity Collaboratives project has inspired Southglade school to participate in more creative projects and Graham's work has inspired other teachers in Nottingham to use sound and mixed media in the classroom. Since the current national curriculum gives teachers and schools limited time to

explore creativity, being part of the Creativity Collaboratives project was an invaluable experience for Southglade school. It was important as it provided all children involved with the chance to explore their creativity and curiosity where they otherwise might not be able to due to the tight curriculum and lack of funding for creative subjects. It was an especially brilliant enrichment experience for children from deprived backgrounds who might not get opportunities to develop their creative skills outside of school. The project facilitated the teaching of essential creative skills to the children which will go hand in hand with their academic knowledge, giving them a full set of transferable skills for future life. Emma confirmed she would definitely like to see more room made for creativity in the national curriculum and hopefully this project will demonstrate the value it has for students and staff in the UK.

*Written by Jemima Corrie, a Year 2 student on the BA Education course at the University of Nottingham. She did a placement as Educational Journalist for Creativity Collaboratives: "The position appealed to me as I am passionate about encouraging creative teaching and learning methods in schools, which is exactly what the project is all about. My school visits and interviews with teachers involved in the project confirm that combining the arts with curricular learning objectives absolutely enhances students' learning at school."*

**[www.challengenottingham.co.uk/creativity-collaboratives](http://www.challengenottingham.co.uk/creativity-collaboratives)**