

Yr 1 Case Study: Rosehill School and Usha Mahenthrialingam



[Watch video](#) created by Sarah Bailey

I met with Sarah Bailey, a teacher at Rosehill School, to discuss her experiences in the Creativity Collaboratives project. The practitioner they chose to work with was Usha Mahenthrialingam, who specialises in textile design and has a background in working with SEND children, which was critical as the students at this school have special educational needs. She aimed to combine her art form with the school's learning objective of supporting occupational therapy for motor skills. Usha's introduction of creativity to the students at Rosehill enabled them to develop their fine motor skills and interoceptive senses as "she used art to help the students understand and control their bodies in a gross motor way in order to be able to use their fine motor skills". **She was fun, accessible, and imaginative when working with the children in a way that enabled the children to express themselves and communicate through creativity.**

Sarah said that spending the day with Usha hugely enhanced their learning of fine motor skills in a way which perhaps they might not have achieved without the experience. Academically, **their understanding of patterns, colours, maths skills (e.g. geometric designs, symmetry, repetition), science skills (e.g. balance, sense of gravity, body awareness, engineering) advanced dramatically over the course of the day.** Emotionally, the day allowed the children to become more communicative, confident and independent. For example, Sarah told me about a child who typically lacks confidence and doesn't interact with other children but by the end of the day he was working collaboratively with others and using colours and patterns imaginatively in ways he had never done before. This individual journey demonstrated a monumental moment of improvement for him which was a joy to witness by the staff at Rosehill and was thanks to their participation in the Creativity Collaboratives project. This newly discovered confidence and independence has continued into the children's day-to-day life at school, demonstrating huge growth since the project.

Sarah mentioned she felt that the child-led nature of the day was particularly beneficial to the students' learning. It meant that they could focus on exploring their own creativity and the journey it took to come up with their own design rather than being concerned with an outcome. **As a teacher, she learned "not to have limited expectations, keep open minded, let go of the reins and truly allow the outcome to come from the child's passion and expression".**

The legacy of the creativity collaboratives project can be displayed on the walls of the school for all students, staff, and visitors to see. With over 50% of the students at Rosehill having specific mental health needs, this opportunity gave them a chance to express themselves in their own unique ways. The children felt valued and proud of the beautiful artwork they contributed to making. It is clear that the outcomes of this residency show that creativity is so beneficial to SEND children, so we need to see more creativity in schools to allow children to become the people they really are. Sarah added, "With current mental health statistics and living in post-covid times, we need to see children being given the chance to express themselves" as opposed to just being prepared for exams which test memory rather than utilising skills. **Sarah concluded that the whole day was amazing: it was emotional to witness so much growth in every child's unique journey, and brilliant to see their holistic development continue into their everyday lives.**

Written by Jemima Corrie, a Year 2 student on the BA Education course at the University of Nottingham. For her placement, she took on the role of educational Journalist for the Creativity Collaboratives Project in Nottingham. "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."



In September the young people of Rosehill and Usha Mahenthiralingam worked in collaboration to create fabric art to celebrate the movement of nature.



Our creative journey was 100% child led and focused on the creative process not the finished outcome.....



We began with 'Tinker Art' – 3D collage using everyday objects. This helps the young people develop their motor skills and think about shape, pattern and colour in a playful way that builds their creative confidence.



These are screenshots from the video produced by teacher Sarah Bailey at Rosehill School. The video outlines the process from playing with shapes to painting on fabric, developing independence, fine motor skills and creating joy!

