



Light Up School Learning

**Teacher Development Project
Impact Report**

phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation



Introduction

“ It’s the best training I have had in the last fifteen years. ”

Comment from a teacher who has been involved throughout the two year project Nov 2022

Light Up School Learning (LUSL) was a two-year Continuing Professional Development Learning project, which aimed to develop arts-based teaching in schools, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund.

The project, which ran from September 2021 – July 2023, was led by Travelling Light and involved artists working alongside teachers from five primary schools across Bristol¹.

The central focus of the project was to explore three key inquiry questions:

- How effective is this model of arts-based delivery in developing teachers’ practice?
- How can arts-based learning improve pupils’ oracy, emotional literacy and wellbeing?
- How has the project led to a cultural shift within the whole school and its approach to the arts and arts-based teaching?

Independent Evaluator Dr. Elaine Faull was commissioned to produce an extensive evaluation of the impact of the project, using both qualitative and quantitative data. Semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and reflection sessions were carried out with artists, teachers, pupils and members of the School Leadership Teams, including Headteachers.

This report summarises the main findings of the project in terms of impact on teachers, pupils and whole school culture.

To read in more detail, contact us for the full evaluation: admin@travellinglighttheatre.org.uk

¹ One of these schools left the project in Nov 2022, following the appointment of a new Headteacher and changing school priorities.

Summary of activities over two years:

- 5 Bristol schools started the project – 4 schools remained throughout the 2 years.
- 35 teachers took part in the project – with a mixture of experienced and early career teachers.
- 35 classes of children were involved in the project – children from across the age groups were involved, ranging from Year 1 through to Year 6.
- We delivered 5 Arts Days for the whole school in Autumn 2021 – involving all teachers.
- Over 1700 children participated in at least one element of the project. This includes children who participated in Arts Days, with each school having an Arts Day at the early stages of the project. Over 900 children were involved in the classroom-based element of the project for at least a term.
- 8 artists were involved in the delivery with teachers.
- Artists delivered 408 sessions in school, this included 56 observations (artists observing teachers in class), 25 planning sessions, and 327 sessions with artists and teachers working together in the classroom. Artists also facilitated 12 staff meetings – 3 in each school in year 2.



Impact on teachers

“ Using creative activities brings learning to life. ”

Teacher comment, March 2023

All teachers reported their confidence in using drama-based strategies in their teaching had grown from working with the artists:

“ I am more confident trying out the games and activities we used and have ideas for how to link into other curriculum areas. ”

Year 5 teacher, April 2023

“ It has been so positive to engage the children in learning through music, drama and movement and the children responded so well to it. ”

Year 2 teacher, March 2023

This was particularly the case for Early Career Teachers and Apprentice Teachers, where the impact was significant:

“ As an unqualified teacher in training it has been immense – the best CPD I have had. I’ve learnt how to plan; I’ve learnt about strategies which I can apply straight away. ”

Apprentice Teacher, March 2023

A Senior Leader with responsibility for Early Career Teachers was delighted with the impact the programme made on their professional development:

“ It has really developed him as a teacher. Initially, he was not very clear in class and didn’t project his voice. The LUSL project has really built his confidence and has given him far more presence in the classroom. ”

Deputy Head, July 2023



Impact on pupils

of embedding arts-based practices

“ It helps you learn. It makes you curious and eager to learn. It helps me remember. ”

Year 4 pupil, July 2023

- The use of drama-based activities was found to improve pupils' wider learning.
- Teachers, artists and pupils reported improvements in confidence, oracy and wellbeing, as well as enhanced recall of knowledge and concepts.
- Teachers reported that an arts-based approach significantly enhanced pupils' retention of learning and understanding. This was particularly the case with children living with trauma.
- Teachers reported improved writing outcomes following LUSL lessons.
- The impact on pupils' self-confidence had a longitudinal benefit, even when they had not been part of the project beyond the first year. Pupils who were part of the project in Year 1 reported retaining their self-confidence, improved oracy and enhanced group skills beyond their direct involvement with the project. They appreciated being part of LUSL as it helped them re-build their confidence and social skills, which had been significantly impacted by the Covid lockdowns and subsequent feelings of isolation.



Impact on oracy

Teachers reported seeing an impact in confidence and oracy (speaking and listening) in the pupils they taught.

“ My confidence has got so much bigger. It’s because of the work we have done with [LUSL] – we do so many things which help us to speak and think. ”

Pupil

“ There is one child in the Year 3 class who finds it very difficult to engage in Year 3 curriculum. But when we use creative strategies he comes to life. I’m sure being able to explore topics using drama has really sparked his interest and made him learn more. ”

Teacher

“ I feel really proud because I can have a conversation with adults. I don’t put my head down and run off anymore. ”

Pupil



Impact on emotional literacy and wellbeing

Observations of lessons throughout the project suggest pupils felt more positive during and after the session. Teachers also spoke of changes, such as pupils showing more resilience, managing their emotions better and overcoming fears.

“ It has given the children time to work positively and improved their well-being. ”

Teacher, June 2023

“ It helps with our stress as well as learning. When we get stressed as a class, Mr SM uses a game to take the stress away. ”

Pupil



Impact on self-confidence

Light Up School Learning being responsible for developing self-confidence was most frequently reported by teachers across the project.

“ During the sessions you could see a marked difference, particularly in those less likely to engage in learning; they came to life, they speak out and have purposeful answers. ”

Teacher

This was also significantly reported by pupils. In many cases, particularly older pupils, recognised developing confidence was important in a range of situations.

“ You need to be able to communicate well in life if you are to be successful and these sessions have helped me. You need to be able to communicate or nothing will work properly. ”

Year 5 pupil, May 2023



Increased pupil engagement and motivation

Pupils reported that they worked better in groups and that the climate of the classroom had positively changed. They particularly spoke of improved skills and development in team work, and increased motivation in their learning.

Most teachers recognised that pupils were more motivated in their learning.

“ Everyone is participating and engaging in their work. They’re learning more to do teamwork... it’s making them more focussed. ”

Teacher, May 2023

“ There has been a good impact in the class. Children look forward to the artists coming into the class. Children, particularly those in the middle who can sometimes be overlooked, have spoken a lot more. They also have improved writing. ”

Teacher, June 2023



Writing outcomes

Following creative input in lessons, there was often a focus on written work. The resulting impact in terms of motivating learners to write was regularly noted by teachers.

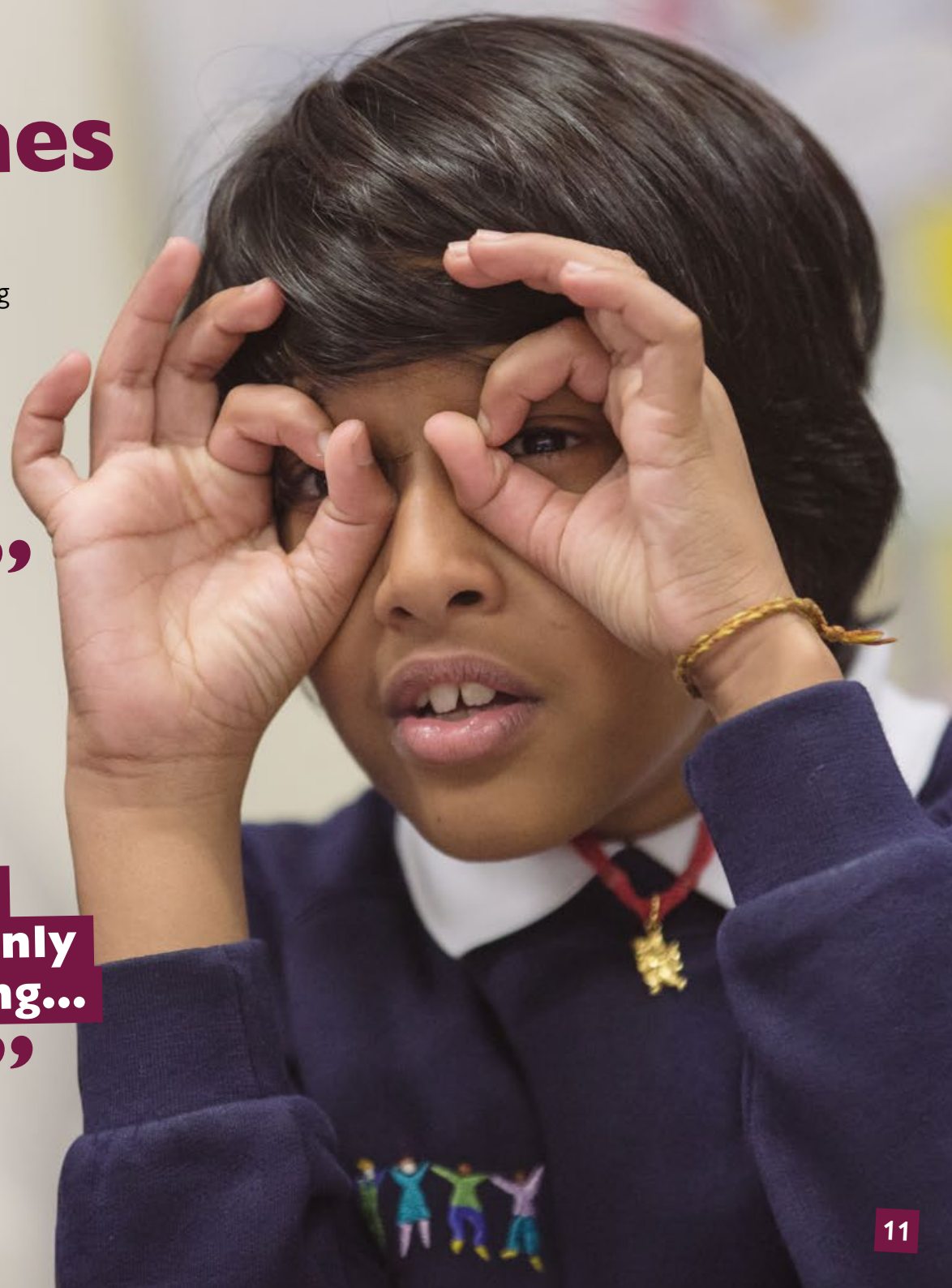
“ Better writing has been seen after drama sessions as a result of children immersing themselves in situations more. ”

Teacher

Many pupils spoke of LUSL lessons helping the development of their imagination and, consequently, finding it easier to write. Teachers also spoke of improved written outcomes following LUSL lessons.

“ I’ve seen a real change in confidence in the class not only in speaking but also in writing... the difference is vast. ”

Teacher





Retention of knowledge, understanding and enhanced learning

Teachers reported the lessons having a positive impact on pupils' retention of learning and improved understanding.

“ The approach really helps in lessons – the children are able to associate the actions we have been doing to help them remember the learning. ”

Year 3 Teacher, March 2023

Teachers and pupils spoke of drama-based strategies consolidating their learning, particularly with increased understanding of abstract ideas.

“ Memory of learning – many of our children are living in homes where they suffer from toxic stress and this impacts on their memory, so using a strategy or approach which enhances their learning is really valuable for us. ”

Year 3 Teacher, July 2023

Pupils thought that using their imagination and linking learning to stories and characters impacted positively on their experience of lessons. Having someone with expertise in an artistic discipline deliver the content further enhanced the experience

“ Learning like this it is easier to remember. ”

Year 4 Pupil, February 2023

“ When you imagine it, it makes you think and then we did it and it helps you learn – because you can see it in your head. ”

Year 3 Pupil, February 2023



Longitudinal impact of the project on pupils

Increased confidence is long-lasting

Amongst the groups of pupils revisited from three different schools, the vast majority spoke of the impact of the project being retained.

The pupils gave examples of how their increased confidence had been maintained, particularly in speaking out and making their voice heard, and in dealing with new social situations.

The Headteacher in one school observed there had been sustained impact on their confidence, oracy and resilience as they moved into Year 6.

“ During lockdown my confidence went and I wasn’t very confident when I came back to school. Travelling Light made a real difference to my confidence and I feel very confident again. ”

Year 6 Pupil, July 2023

“ I found it really helped with public speaking – also it was really good when we had to do persuasive writing because if you had tried out some ideas first then you could write more persuasively... and you could talk more persuasively in public speaking. ”

Year 6 Pupil, July 2023

Considerable impact was reported by one class teacher and an artist when they observed a pupil with selective mutism speaking for the first time. Over the course of the next few sessions her confidence grew and so did her oracy skills and with them the confidence to speak in the class.

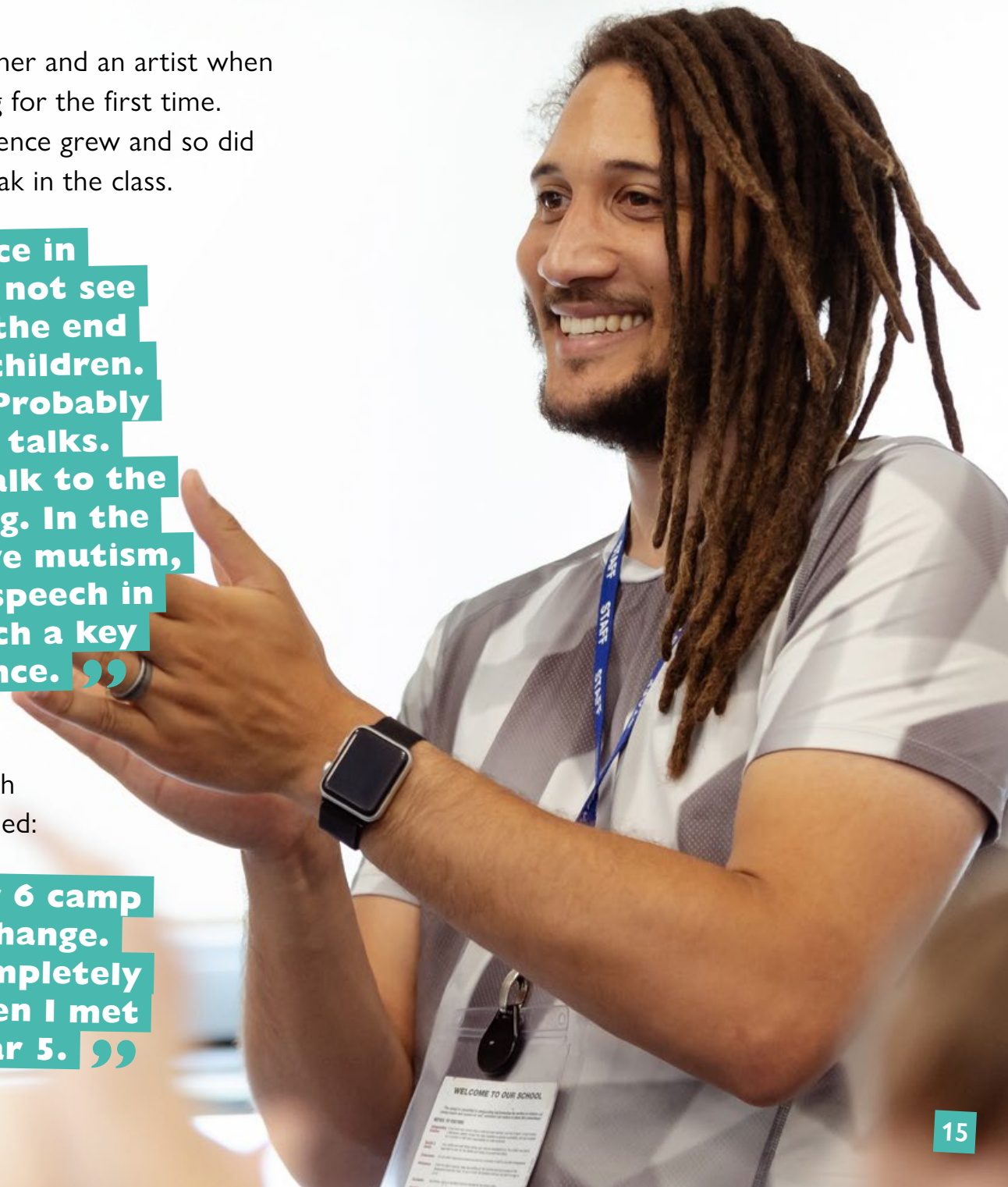
“It certainly built the confidence in the children, although you might not see the impact immediately. But by the end I could see 100% change in some children. The children’s writing improved. Probably the biggest change was the TED talks. The children being able to give a talk to the rest of the class, that was amazing. In the class there was a child with selective mutism, and she was able to give her speech in front of the class. Drama was such a key to unlock children’s confidence.”

Teacher

“When asked whether the confidence of the child with selective mutism had continued, the teacher responded:

Absolutely, I went on the Year 6 camp this year and could see the change. This child’s personality has completely changed from how she was when I met her at the beginning of Year 5.”

Teacher




Impact on whole school culture

The learning was shared with the whole school through staff meetings.

- Introducing bi-termly staff meetings/INSET sessions focussing on creative practice and arts-based teaching had a big impact. The use of drama-based activities increased considerably as a result of the staff-meeting intervention.
- Involvement of the whole staff through INSET sessions or staff meetings raised the profile of the project amongst the staff, provided all teachers with new strategies and games which they could use in their own classrooms whether they were directly working alongside artists or not. There was increased opportunity for teachers and artists to come together, network and share experiences.
- Staff meetings may seem like a 'small act' but had significantly more impact than would be expected for 3-5 hours of Continuing Professional Development Learning activities across a year.
- New arts-based strategies contributed to an increased excitement to share best practice, consequently giving art-based learning a higher profile across the school.
- Teacher attendance to whole staff meetings where LUSL facilitators were present created a new found confidence for teachers using Drama in their lessons.
- As teachers had a ringfenced opportunity to try games out themselves, led by a facilitator, they were able to empathise more effectively with how their students might feel during the activities.

“ It hasn't been just an isolated project with one year group. I think there has been a cultural shift within schools, because of the staff meetings and all those other elements. ”

Artist

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a bright blue t-shirt, is seen from the back with her arms outstretched. The t-shirt has white text on it: "Just... imagination..." and "www.travellinglighttheatre.co.uk". In the background, a smiling woman with blonde hair is visible. A quote is overlaid on the left side of the image.

“ The project has achieved far more than we thought it would...what LUSL has helped us to explore is that you can use drama for teaching pretty much anything. ”

Headteacher, June 2023

Creative learning opportunities Travelling Light can offer your school

Arts Day & Play in a Week

Our Arts Days and Play in a Week activities are a great way of creatively exploring topics in groups and supporting your curriculum. Please contact us to find out more or you can watch a short video about Play in a Week on our website – scan the QR code below.

Bespoke Workshops (EYFS, KS1-4, FE & HE available)

We work with many different settings for our bespoke workshops. If you have a specific project that you would like us to support, do get in touch and we can match you up with one of our experienced facilitators.

Teacher/Whole staff CPD

Travelling Light can deliver both face-to-face or online training for staff. We want to help give teachers the tools they need to confidently use creativity in their everyday teaching.



Scan me to
find out more

With thanks to...

Our 5 partner schools and all the fantastic teachers involved.

Our brilliant Light Up School Learning artists: Raph Clarkson, Liz Felton, Casey Lloyd, Carlota Matos, Laura Street, Stevie Thompson, Willow Vidal-Hall & Kate Pasco.

Our evaluator: Dr. Elaine Faull

Everyone at the Paul Hamlyn Foundation Teacher Development Fund.



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