Creativity Collaboratives pilot programme

Contents

Freelands
Foundation

Introduction

This report is a summary of findings from evaluation consultancy led by Abigail D'Amore Associates between September 2023 – July 2024.

There were three main elements to our approach:

1. Collating and thematically summarising data provided by Collaboratives
2. Consensus workshops to capture a snapshot of the outcomes being observed by teachers
3. A sample of school visits facilitated by us, involving pupil voice workshops, and interviews with teachers, senior leaders and partners

We structured our work within three categories:

1. Tangible **changes in practice, pedagogy and strategy**
2. **Conditions for Success:** The principles or commitments needed for Teaching for Creativity to be successful and effective
3. The **outcomes and impact** that result from these changes. Usually learning, personal and social outcomes for pupils, teachers, senior leaders and sometimes the wider community

The report is informed by the following data:

- Summaries of impact and conditions for success gathered from 95 teachers/senior leaders in 7 consensus workshops and knowledge from Creativity Collaborative teams at a national CC evaluation day in Birmingham (November 2023)

- Analysis of data shared by Collaboratives:
  - 36 teacher interviews and 11 senior leader interviews
    (provided by The St Marylebone CE School and C Change Collaboratives)

  - 27 survey responses and 11 teacher reflective diary entries (provided by C Change)

  - 2 Collaborative evaluator observations and internal report narratives
    (provided by The St Marylebone CE School and C Change Collaboratives)

  - 3 summaries of interviews/focus groups with pupils, teachers and senior leaders
    (provided by The University of Winchester Academy Trust Collaborative)

  - 3 summaries of pupil focus groups and 6 survey analysis summaries
    (provided by the Anglian Learning Collaborative)

- Analysis of data collected by Abigail D'Amore Associates via school visits, including pupil voice workshops, and interviews with teachers:
  - 3 school visits with the The Elliot Foundation Collaborative
  - 2 school visits with the the North East Creativity Collaborative Network
  - 4 school visits with the The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative
  - 2 school visits with Creativity Collaboratives Nottingham
- Analysis of data collected by Abigail D'Amore Associates via online interviews and discussions with teachers and senior leaders:
  - 2 teacher interviews with The Penryn Partnership Collaborative
  - 2 discussions (senior leaders and the research team) with the Anglian Learning Collaborative
- Evidence published in external and internal reports by the The University of Winchester Academy Trust[1], The Penryn Partnership[2], The Elliot Foundation[3], the Anglian Learning[4] and C Change[5] Collaboratives
- Top level analysis of Reflective Portfolio summaries provided by Durham University

This report was written for an internal audience of key stakeholders, and presents an emerging picture of approaches to Teaching for Creativity, conditions for success and outcomes of the Creativity Collaboratives pilot phase. As our work was delivered in the final year of the pilot programme, we weren't able to evaluate change over time, so the information presented here is a snapshot of Collaboratives' work and outcomes. All Collaboratives are represented to some extent but the data is not fully representative of the breadth and depth of all Collaboratives. This report concludes our work on the pilot phase and is accompanied by a 'pupil voice' summary report, which presents pupils' evaluation responses in more detail. This work happened alongside the national programme evaluation conducted by Durham University, whose report will be published during 2025.

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[1]Sowden, P. T., Seymour, M,. Warren, F., Spencer, E., Mansfield, S., & Martin, C. (2023). Winchester and Halterworth Creativity Collaborative First Research Report: Context, Knowledge, Agency, Pedagogies and Leadership for Creativity in Schools. Creativity-first-report_final-web by University of Winchester - Issuu

[2]Crickmay, U., Childs, S., Chappell, K. (2023). Penryn Partnership Creativity Collaboratives Preparing for a Creative Future Year Two Report: Build and Test. Year 2 - Penryn College (penryn-college.cornwall.sch.uk)

[3]Final summary about 'Repertoires of Practice' and forthcoming final report about the Elliot Foundation Creativity Collaborative prepared by Victoria Kinsella and Emma Nenadic, and shared for the purpose of this report

[4]Anglian: The Teaching for Creativity Playbook, which at the time of writing had not been published

[5]C Change: The Story So Far (2024) https://cchange.hfcmat.com/sign-up/report/

Overarching themes

By the end of the pilot phase, from all data we collected and curated we had observed three overarching themes:

1. For most Collaboratives there was a clear process of 1) establishing foundations (particularly research, resources, knowledge, understanding and confidence); 2) testing, experimenting and reflection; and 3) embedding and planning for future sustainability. In some cases, Collaboratives described each phase as lasting one year, which suggests it was important three-year programme funding was awarded.

2. The Creativity Collaboratives pilot led to a significant development in pupils', teachers', senior leaders', and in some cases partners', understanding of Teaching for Creativity, including developing a shared language for creativity within and across schools and often challenging the perception that creativity is the domain of the arts.

3. In many cases, Creativity Collaboratives unlocked an increase in agency for teachers and pupils, and this was supported by whole school changes to valuing agency and freedom. This is both an outcome and condition for success, and seems to have been at the heart of enabling change.

Pedagogical approaches

Collaboratives adopted, developed and tested a wide range of pedagogical approaches. The pedagogies mostly fell into three categories:

1. Many involved established tools and techniques specifically designed to encourage and support creative skills and habits, e.g. 'Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce' or 'Ideate, Explore, Evaluate'. Many of these were techniques or theories developed by creativity and education experts, such as Ron Berger, Bill Lucas, and Guy Claxton.

2. Some used existing materials, or what teachers described as standard teaching practice, but with more awareness and reflection around how students were applying and developing creative skills and habits, e.g. developing an existing lesson plan or scheme of work to be structured around a more explicit creative process and allowing more time for creative exploration, and/or being more explicit about using creative language.

3. Some involved collaboration with artistic practitioners often leading to artistic outputs such as performances, e.g. students from the Penryn Collaborative took part in a Light and Shadow workshop with the Cornubian Arts & Science Trust.

The Anglian Learning Collaborative based their pedagogies around their own version of the creativity wheel, which had four categories: Questioning, Modelling, Thinking Hard and Collaboration. More specifically, techniques included:

- **Questioning:** 'Wicked Questions' (open questions to expand pupils' thinking), eliciting questions from pupils, 'Recall Questions' (which built on prior knowledge and activate recall of subject-specific knowledge), and 'Hinge Questions' (which were designed to change the course of learning when needed).

- **Modelling:** A teaching strategy through which teachers model how to do something (for example how to manipulate an equation, throw a javelin, structure a paragraph, or think analytically about a historical source) or how to apply creative habits of mind (such as inquisitiveness). An example activity was 'My Turn, Your Turn'.

- **Thinking Hard:** This included, for example, investigating artefacts through action research; pupils summarising and evaluating their own work; and 'Goal free tasks' (which were about pupils exploring something based on a question with no agenda).

- **Collaboration:** This focused on pupils sharing ideas, receiving others' ideas, and experiencing others' perspectives. Activity examples included 'Revolving Whiteboards' and group mind maps.

The C Change Collaborative's approaches were structured by their 'Signature Pedagogies' framework, which was built around Bill Lucas' Creative Habits of Mind. They focused in particular on three domains: Collaborative, Disciplined and Inquisitive. They drew on many known and established techniques such as 'Think, Pair, Share', 'Split Screen Planning', 'Creativity Bingo' and 'Pose, Pause, Pounce, Bounce'. They also had a focus on Growth Mindset, supported by techniques such as 'Mindset Maker' based on Dr Carol Dweck's work and 'The Power of Yet', which is essentially about allowing space, time and possibility when working through an idea or creative process. In an Early Years setting they focused on Ron Berger's 'Authentic Audience' which is about creating opportunities to share work and develop a sense that others care about their work. Other themes within the C Change Collaborative's toolkit were metacognition, questioning techniques and redrafting/editing.

The Elliot Foundation Collaborative's pedagogical approach was drawn from regular, consistent pupil engagement with creative practitioners from their cultural partners Stan's Cafe, Open Theatre and Sampad. These partners developed collaborative practices with schools/learners, identified specific challenges that need addressing and tailored creative activities to learners' needs. Pedagogies and practice that emerged from this process included:

- Slow pedagogy: 'favouring repetition and familiarity to enhance learners' creative responses gradually'

- Intensive interactions and physical interactions

- Using stimuli (i.e. everyday objects) to ignite creativity and explore human emotion

- Playful scenarios and games encouraging and cultivating imaginative thinking; interactive storytelling

- Sonic interactions using sound effects and music

- Role play

- Using sensory experiences in the creative process

- Embodied experiences (using facial expressions, body language, movements) to express creative ideas

- Progression pedagogies: 'allowing learners to steadily progress from imitation to abstract'

- Narrative inquiry

The University of Winchester Academy Trust Collaborative's pedagogies were structured around their Teaching for Creativity Planning Tool (again based on Bill Lucas' Creative Habits of Mind). In this case, the five habits were combined with the Ideate, Explore, Evaluate creative process, and underpinned by general principles in support of Teaching for Creativity.

Examples of their approaches were:

- Designing a rover for a new planet: *exploring* lots of different vehicle designs; *ideating* collaboratively and testing out different possibilities within fixed parameters); and *evaluating* against the original design criteria.

- A creative writing scheme of work based on a text as the stimulus. Students listened to the story and used actions as they listened, and they played with the story through role play, they recorded the story in different creative ways (film, drawings etc). A key feature of this approach was being explicit about the creative process in order to develop students' creative vocabulary.

- Applying kinesthetic (such as role play) and mindful approaches (such as two minutes of silence during which time students visualise scenes from their ideas) to existing materials and practices used for creative writing and character development.

The University of Winchester Academy Trust Collaborative also incorporated collaboration with creative partner organisations (e.g. opera company The Grange) leading to large-scale, Collaborative-wide workshops and events.

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network's work was mostly structured around Bill Lucas' Creative Habits of Mind, with schools leading creative enquiries around topics that focussed on sub-habits, for example:

- Empowering teachers to take learning outdoors including beach learning

- Giving ownership of Creative Habits of Mind to children

- Stripping back knowledge and focussing on being inquisitive and imaginative

- Developing language of creativity through working walls

- Developing imagination through critical thinking

Schools worked with creative partners, and a network of student creativity champions was developed. There was much focus on developing the North East network of schools, with peer-to-peer visits, regional events and activities and CPD, and the development of a toolkit.

The Penryn Partnership Collaborative's pedagogies sat within their two frameworks: the Penryn Partnership Model of Creative Skills and their Creative Pedagogies Framework (for which the categories were Empowerment, Autonomy and Agency; Risk, Immersion and Play; Possibilities; Generating and Exploring Ideas; Individual, Collaborative and Communal Activities for Change; Problem Solving; Ethics and Trusteeship; and Professional Wisdom). Their overarching research question was *"Does teaching creativity across the curriculum lead to young people who are better prepared for their future in a changing workforce?"* and consequently their approaches often involved a 'real-world' industry partner and activities that mirrored professional processes (such as designing a mixing desk). Activities included trips and experiences that introduced teachers and students to new creative inspiration, such as visiting Writers' Block, an immersive writing space where they took part in a creative writing session.

Examples of their approaches were:

- How stories influence play in the Early Years
- Teachers standing back and allowing students space to take risks, act on their own ideas and use an enquiry-based approach
- Developing creative skills through outdoor learning, e.g. students of different ages working together to plan outdoor activities
- Generating ideas through immersive writing
- Using reflective and self-regulation strategies
- Designing scientific enquiry questions
- Allowing time for immersive experiences and open-ended tasks
- Imagination and playful experimentation
- Named approaches including No Pen Day, Panning for Gold and Trying Not To Have An Idea

By the end of the pilot, The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative had compiled their 'Pantry', which brought together conditions for success and examples of creative approaches. The idea of the Pantry was to demonstrate cross-phase and cross-curricular approaches to Teaching for Creativity, which schools had refined over the pilot and embedded within everyday pedagogy. The word Pantry was used to suggest the importance of Teaching for Creativity as an embedded and everyday part of practice and pedagogy, rather than only being used on special occasions. The idea was also that there is no single recipe for creativity but neither is it random. Underpinning their approaches were two themes: gamifying activities and problem solving, for example:

- The use of A2 white boards for collaborative problem solving and live feedback
- Creative approaches to oracy
- Iterative thinking
- The use of games, such as Just A Minute, The Trading Game, students' own version of Monopoly, and new games invented by students (for example new racket/bat and ball games in P.E.)
- Creative writing exercises such as journaling
- Replacing Learning Objectives with Learning Questions
- Lessons structured around student debate

Creativity Collaboratives Nottingham worked with artist-practitioners and arts organisations to deliver approaches that included:

- Developing creativity through music and dance
- Developing creative writing, spoken word and drama opportunities across the school
- Developing creative play at break times
- Developing creative work linked to specific curriculum areas
- CPD for staff on digital art, music teaching, drama techniques
- Using 'Mantle of the Expert' strategies to embed creative approaches
- Play/create/explore materials workshops to develop knowledge and skills in digital technology across a school
- Story-telling and emotional literacy projects
- Science/DT/engineering projects
- Exploring how the visual arts support teaching for creativity
- Establishing a creative hub across schools in one locality
- Developing creative language and pupil voice work in the hospital and sanctuary schools
- Creating an environment to study British wildlife in the special school
- Exploring how dance and movement can contribute to mental health and wellbeing
- Exploring how to create better links between art and design and a school's growing understanding of place and community

Conditions for success

Collaboratives collectively learned and shared what they felt was needed for Teaching for Creativity to thrive. While there were some differences across the Collaboratives (due to the differing nature of the classroom activity), clear themes and sub-themes emerged.

Theme 1: Consistent and relevant CPD

- Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting
- Visits to other schools and observing good practice
- Learning from staff from different key stages/age ranges and understanding how approaches can be adapted and adopted
- Purposeful, embedded whole-school school professional learning
- Subject and context specific CPD including for ECTs and PGCE students
- Regular opportunities for professional dialogue
- Time and capacity for shared planning – across schools and within departments/teams
- Formal/structured Teacher Research Groups
- Continuing access to a collaborative network

We don't have time to think about things, unless we're told to think about them. You only have a certain amount of time don't you, and actually being told to focus on something – and it's something that actually might be quite small – but in depth, is quite a nice thing to do.
Teacher interview

Theme 2: School culture and ethos

- Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity
- Vision and strategy for creativity in the school
- Common understanding about what creativity means and a shared language for this
- Consistency across whole schools
- Creativity written into School Development Plan and school policies
- Teaching for Creativity being aligned with whole-school priorities
- Fostering an environment where staff and students can take risks and have permission to fail without fear of judgement or accountability
- Keeping children at the centre and listening and responding to pupil voice
- Connection to community and place
- Acknowledgement that this is a long process and doesn't happen overnight – incremental steps to change
- Performance management system that takes the emphasis away from accountability re grades/progress
- Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches (this emerged more strongly in the final phase of data analysis)

…she [senior leader] really celebrates the creativity, the teaching for creativity that I do and really encourages it. And there's been times even she's walked past my classroom, and she's seen what we're doing, I don't know, a science experiment and it's "Oh, please take photos, I want to see this in the newsletter". You know, it feels really recognized and celebrated. And in terms of like, other members of SLT, you know, there's been times they've asked me to talk about planning in a staff meeting, which is obviously as an early career teacher, that's really nice. I feel very kind of appreciated. And yeah, everything's been that I know, I can always ask questions if I'm not sure about things. *Teacher*

Theme 3: Access to theories, frameworks and resources

- Teachers given time to share practice around pedagogies and frameworks
- Accessibility of toolkits and resources
- Accepting different approaches are needed for different classes/schools
- Focussed research and CPD
- Opportunities to reflect on what works / doesn't work
- Existing tools and frameworks adapted and 'owned' by individual Collaboratives
- Ongoing funding, particularly for releasing teachers from timetable
- Physical resources and equipment

A framework that is related and relevant to the setting, that fits with the current priorities and firmly places space for creativity and reflection at the heart of the self-improving school system. *Teacher: consensus workshop*

Theme 4: Capacity for committed and skilled people to lead the work on the ground

- Distributive leadership and staffing structures that break down hierarchy and allow more peer-to-peer collaboration, sharing and feedback
- Developing staff ownership by creating models and approaches together rather than being 'handed' an initiative
- Passionate people who can advocate for creativity and support others
- Having clearly defined roles for all who are involved
- People from a wide range of sectors / experts in the field (not just education)
- People with coaching skills
- People who are open minded and display the creative habit skills themselves (includes staff, leaders, pupils, parents)
- Having a creative lead in each school

Staff across the trust have been given TLRs [Teaching and Learning Responsibility] for teaching for creativity. *Creativity Lead*

Theme 5: Effective partnership working

- Giving time and space to establish, develop, monitor and evaluate partnerships
- Ensure a shared vision involving the right partners to reduce barriers
- Maintain open, honest and timely communication opportunities
- Ensure a regular return to teaching and learning, so it remains at the core
- Access to external, 'real-world' industry and creative partners
- Partnership with parents/guardians
- Funding partnerships
- Cross-school partnerships and collaborations (this began to emerge more in the final phase of data analysis)

[There are] Lots of creative things that we've done, and continue to do as a group of schools and being pulled together as the group makes it more fun. *Senior Leader*

Theme 6: Cycles of research, evaluation and reflection

- Being aware of evidence and research that can directly inform practice
- Having access to and knowledge of findings from existing research, and easy-to-access tools and literature
- Training in how to carry out research e.g. action research techniques, induction for teachers new to research
- Time for teachers and partners to reflect and think about their findings
- A clear methodology for research and evaluation i.e. planned, shared, with range of different voices/experiences and that it is accessible and includes pupil voice
- Strong working relationship with academic/university partner

Previously we were probably all conscious of [the child's involvement] but the research makes you more consciously aware. A lot of what we were doing has a clearer focus and teachers that are involved, fed on why they are engaged in [the activity]. *Teacher*

Theme 7: Advocacy and communication about the work and the learning

- Having a shared language for creativity
- Having visibility of creativity within the school
- Communicating findings regularly (newsletters, assemblies, celebrations etc)
- Opportunities to share good practice and celebrate impact
- Pupil voice, 'youth networking' and teacher voice being central
- Parent/guardian buy in
- Production of high quality resources that can be shared
- Regular check-ins from Creativity Collaborative lead help keep creativity on the priority list

Creativity Champions have continued to work alongside participating schools, personalising the 'creativity journey' to different contexts. *Academic partner*

Theme 8: Equality, equity, diversity, inclusion

- Pupils to lead in the learning, having choices, options and responsibility for their decisions
- Everyone is on board, and it's not tokenistic
- Allowing pupils to develop their creative processes with agency
- Pupil voice – engaging pupils in the development of the programme
- Flexibility – not one size fits all
- Ensuring representation and role models so pupils can see themselves in the range of expertise
- Adaptive and reflective teaching
- Having the right level of support in place for a range of learners
- Assessment and tracking systems that mean all children's learning can be tracked in appropriate/equitable ways

We've got a few children in our school who need adaptations… we've looked at what makes it accessible for all, so all our children can access the creative skills, it will just be the outcome is slightly different. *Teacher*

The outcomes of Teaching for Creativity

Teachers and senior leaders within Collaboratives mostly reported short term or immediate outcomes, based on their observations of pupils, themselves and colleagues within a particular time frame (i.e a lesson, series of lessons, or project-by-project). We detected some confusion regarding describing 'outcomes' and 'outputs' (with the latter being more common than the former), and that teachers often described 'what happened' as opposed to 'the impact of what happened'. Medium-term outcomes for whole school communities (including pupils, teachers and senior leaders) started to emerge in some of the data. Longer-term impact on wider communities, including for example older pupils entering the workplace, was not to be expected at the pilot stage in the life-cycle of the programme.

The most commonly shared short- and medium-term outcomes were:

- Pupils developing more **ownership over learning**

- Improved **engagement and participation** among pupils

- Pupils demonstrating increased **confidence and resilience**

- Pupils **developing creative skills** such as problem solving, collaboration, critical thinking and meta-cognition

- Teachers developing **increased knowledge and understanding about creativity**

- Teachers **improving and evolving** their **teaching practice**

- Teachers finding **more enjoyment in teaching**

- An increase in **senior leadership/whole staff investment in creativity**

- An emergent **shared language and understanding of creativity** between pupils, teachers, senior leaders and in some cases partners

- Some evidence of **structural changes** (i.e. to environment/timetable) and **systemic changes** (i.e. inclusion in school development/improvement plans, school policies and appraisal systems) within schools

The last phase of data analysis highlighted additional emerging themes and nuances:

- More evidence of pupils developing **skills for their futures**

- Increased **collaboration** amongst pupils was particularly well-evidenced

- Increased **enjoyment** was particularly important to pupils being more engaged in learning

- The most commonly evidenced creative capacity was **persistence**

- Pupils feeling a greater sense of **imagination and possibility**

- Pupils and teachers continuing to emphasise outcomes around **agency** and being **more able to take risks**

- Teachers feeling a greater sense of **validation** in their practice and pedagogy

- Teaching for Creativity becoming increasingly **prioritised and embedded within whole-school strategy and values**

- More **widespread implementation of creative practice and pedagogies**, supported by more changes in curriculum design

- More reports of Teaching for Creativity being recognised as a vehicle for **school improvement**

There were some references to improved **mental health and wellbeing** of pupils and teachers, although this wasn't qualified with strong evidence. We can make an assumption that the outcomes listed are likely to contribute to increased wellbeing in the medium- to long-term. Evidence in support of improved mental health and wellbeing was strengthened in the final phase of data collection, for example pupils having **more opportunities and skills for self expression and regulating their emotions**; pupils feeling **creativity supported or improved other aspects of school life**; teachers **seeing the value of creative approaches as an aid to wellbeing and mental health**; and pupils **associating words like 'happiness' and 'love' with creativity**. Evidence highlighted the importance of greater freedom and enjoyment in the classroom in unlocking improved wellbeing for pupils and teachers.

> And also you can get your mind off some [stress] a little bit. *Pupil*

> It's about them developing the confidence, the skills, the self belief, the 'happy in their own skin', you know, for some of our children that have experienced trauma… they've got to feel safe and happy before they're ever going to do any learning. I think this helps children that have been through, you know, even down to difficult journeys here to England. *Teacher*

Outcomes of Teaching for Creativity for pupils

Increased ownership over learning

The most common outcome described was pupils having increased ownership and autonomy in their learning. This included examples of pupils: taking increased control over how they contributed to the learning direction; improved ability to reflect on their learning; less passivity and reliance on teachers; feeling empowered to develop their own ideas; and showing increased pride in themselves and their work outputs.

It was implied that this increased investment by pupils' in their own learning contributed to improved quality of work and learning. In one case improvement in GCSE results for a cohort of pupils was attributed to creative approaches in Year 11. Another teacher described an improvement in quality of work from their Year 1 class:

> Last year I taught about [the] Great Fire of London by showing them a video/PowerPoint and worksheet and retention a few days later was poor. This year, they acted it out on the playdeck with paper houses and set fire to the first one and a week later they could remember dates etc. *Teacher*

Increased imagination, sense of possibility, free thinking and 'thinking outside the box'

Relating to the previous category, an additional theme that emerged specifically within evaluation data from pupils was around imagination, sense of possibility, freedom and flexibility of thought. Often pupils linked this to an increased sense of self expression.

> I mean, yeah, because, like, when we do creative things, I think my lessons just give us so much freedom, I can just do whatever I want. I mean, I guess within the limit of it being a poster, or whatever the task is, but yeah, I think it's pretty freeing. *Pupil*

Pupils were reflective about situations in which creativity unlocked imagination, and the possibilities imagination opened up.

> So I think it's using ideas I have or have had, because always when I don't have anything to do, when my mind is not occupied, I immediately think of a new world and like new characters, and I will put myself in the role of someone that I like, and then I will act it all in my head and I will think like, hmmm, now what's new today? And I will have lots of new ideas. Once I was fighting a dragon. At another time, I was just going through boarding school with my friends. *Pupil*
>
> I said freeing, there's no rules when it comes to creativity. It's all just your imagination on paper. *Pupil*

There were some descriptive examples from teachers of how Teaching for Creativity has 'ignited imaginations'; prompted make-believe; stimulated ideas; sparked curiosity, and provoked big questions among pupils.

> We have opened [the questioning] up and it could go off [on a tangent] and the kids just … absolutely love that kind of control of their learning. You often give them that false sense of control in the fact that we're kind of walking you through the steps of the lesson but this turns the lesson on its head and you end up going around the lesson where they need to go where their curiosity took them. *Teacher*

Increased engagement and participation

There was evidence of pupils demonstrating increased engagement, enthusiasm, and motivation for and participation in learning. This included examples of pupils: showing more initiative; being more willing to participate in lessons (e.g. more hands going up, better quality questions being asked by pupils); improved focus and concentration; being more willing to express their opinions/themselves; improved behaviours and less disruption; improvements in listening; and generally being more willing to 'get stuck in':

> I have a pupil who won't 'start' any task at all. Through questioning and the use of a stimulus, they have increased their engagement throughout the lesson because it was 'ok to have a go'. *Teacher*
>
> Year 7 with loud verbal stimming became hyper focused during a creative starter activity – was fab to see. *Teacher*

Enjoyment of and excitement for learning among pupils was regularly noted, with some pupils demonstrating a love of learning, and expressing that learning is more fun when being creative. Enjoyment and engagement was what pupils most commonly associated creativity with, and in pupil voice workshops, the statement most strongly agreed with was about pupils enjoying creative activities.

> They put out like crates and pallets, and everyone's enjoyed like building stuff and finding out new ways to build. Pupil
>
> It was lovely to hear [pupils] who were saying 'I loved that lesson because it felt like I was learning in a different way', and it definitely boosted their confidence. *Teacher*

Teachers referenced the role of enjoyment in unlocking pupils' interest and motivation for learning, and the importance of valuing novel experiences and a wider range of learning styles. There was also evidence to suggest there were specific engagement benefits for pupils with additional needs (e.g. learning being broken down into smaller chunks and more regular feedback being given, which has, for example, supported pupils with ADHD to engage more).

Increased confidence and resilience

There was some evidence of increased personal growth, confidence and resilience among pupils. This included examples of pupils: being more willing to present work in front of their peers/wider audiences; showing less fear of making mistakes; being more willing to take risks; improved self esteem and self-efficacy; greater pride in their work and talking with more confidence using creative language. Some anecdotes were given of pupils who had previously been quiet and withdrawn in lessons being prepared to speak with confidence in front of others, for example:

> I have a boy in my class who is low-attaining, was working on 'sticking with difficulty'. The TA had interjected with 'yet' with various children [and modelled this]. I recently overheard conversations with the pupil and TA and he said 'I can't do it….' then paused and said 'yet'. Really nice moment for him. *Teacher*

Persistence was referenced as one of the most common Creative Habits of Mind developed in pupils.

> In maths before I started doing all of this, if I got a difficult question, I'd just say, I'm not doing it and close my book. But I've realised that actually, it's not just give up, don't do, it's like alright, stick to it, ask my friend, what method have you used to do this, then I'll go back to try again. And then if I don't get it right that time, then I'll go back. And I'll look at the example he's doing on the board. And I'll write that down in my book. So next time I do get a difficult question like that I can say, right, I now know what to do, and how to get to that answer instead of just immediately giving up. *Pupil*

Development of skills for their futures

There were many examples of skills pupils developed in support of future life and careers, notably: critical/divergent thinking; problem solving, and independent learning skills; team-work/relationship building and collaboration skills.

> It was my year 11 [class], and I just… I just didn't speak and they couldn't work it out for ages and they just had to solve it all. And they had to sort of work together, and they had to kind of, you know, sort of think about what the next stage was and how it came. And they were supporting each other and… collaboration was quite good, actually. *Teacher*

Examples were provided of pupils developing reflective and critiquing skills, of their own work and that of others, often resulting in improved results:

> It's given pupils the chance to have creative ownership and to have their own confidence in reviewing each other's work. But rather than saying 'it's a really pretty picture you've incorporated', they've really gone to town and critiqued what pupils have done and given really good feedback. *Teacher*

In the last phase of analysis, there were more reports of pupils deepening their thinking and specific examples of metacognition (e.g. more understanding of "the why and how" of learning and being able to articulate their learning journey).

Evidence suggests that pupils became more equipped with vocational skills, and that Teaching for Creativity supported pupils to become life-long learners equipped for future careers. Within this theme, a common outcome was knowledge becoming more memorable.

I think that when something is more like done in a creative way, it sinks more into the memory compared to hearing my teachers talking in the same format, using slides… I think [it] helps everything sink [in] better. *Pupil*

Pupils' thoughts about this theme were related to both workplace (such as numeracy skills) and life situations (such as buying things in a shop). Other examples included skills or knowledge for making things, language and teamwork. When pupils reflected on this theme, they tended to report specific facts and knowledge (e.g. knowledge about surviving a natural disaster) they felt would be useful for the future, rather than skills.

Relationships and collaboration

In the final phase of analysis, relationships and collaboration amongst pupils and between pupils and teachers was the most common theme within the heading of 'skills for the future'. This includes teachers developing a richer understanding of individual pupils; pupils developing the skills needed for effective collaboration; and pupils feeling more comfortable in themselves as a result of stronger relationships.

It definitely fosters a more comfortable environment especially like in sixth form we have external students as well. As often I'd like not even speak to them because they are completely new people, it's brought us closer together. *Pupil*

Outcomes of Teaching for Creativity for teachers

Increased knowledge and understanding about creativity

The most commonly reported teacher outcome was how teachers deepened their knowledge and understanding of creativity, creative thinking and creative teaching in a range of contexts, including an increased understanding of different pedagogies related to creative habits, and the difference this can make for pupils.

> We developed our understanding of what being creative means. Because I don't think we were 100%... I mean, obviously we've all got we all came in with our different ideas of what creativity means, but I think [this] really helped us pigeonhole exactly what it takes to be creative in this context. *Teacher*

Teachers and senior leaders shared that increased knowledge and understanding led to realisations that Teaching for Creativity goes beyond arts subjects.

> [There was a] change in perception from staff that creativity was just for certain subjects – [we] could see through the research cycles [that it] can be applied in every subject. *Teacher*

Improved teaching practice

There is evidence of an increase in teacher agency, including teachers feeling more ownership over their subject areas, which in some cases led to improved quality of teaching. Examples of this included: redesigning curricular; embedding new pedagogies; and being more collaborative (with peers as well as with pupils).

> The 'ping' moment of understanding – articulating how this isn't something new or a bolt on, but a framework to articulate a lot of what we already do. *Senior leader*

There were descriptions of teachers being more reflective in their practice, more open to creative approaches, and in some cases 'letting go' of fixed ideas and 'conventional norms' and feeling more willing (and able) to take risks. Teachers reflecting on and better accessing their own 'inner creativity' or reconnecting with creative parts of their background/identity were also referenced.

Examples were given of teachers finding more opportunities to co-create with pupils, learn alongside and from pupils, build stronger relationships with pupils, and being more flexible and adaptable in their approaches to meet the needs of individuals.

There were many more examples of improved teaching practice in more recent analysis including teachers planning more purposefully, and the positive impact of Teaching for Creativity becoming embedded in training and support for Early Career Teachers.

Increased enjoyment of teaching

Teaching for Creativity and the opportunity to experiment with teaching and learning for many seemingly re-ignited and refreshed their teaching practice, prompting a renewed energy, enjoyment and passion for their work. In consensus workshops teachers shared words such as 'joy', 'fun', 'awe', 'wonder' to describe their own personal experiences as adults in the classroom.

Teachers talk about the joy and 'buzz' created by embracing new approaches, and the freedom and fluidity to break away from traditional moulds. Relating to this, teachers' experiences of increased agency often led to greater enjoyment, satisfaction and effectiveness.

> But what it's given me now is more autonomy over how free the kids can be, which makes learning so much more exciting for them, it makes my engagement with them so much higher. *Teacher*

They also talk about an increased sense of validation in their practice, and reassurance that they were already effectively incorporating creativity. This too contributed to greater enjoyment, motivation and job satisfaction.

> I think just having the knowledge that what they're doing already is creative, saying that these are the areas that you are creative in makes everyone feel that they are creative as a teacher anyway. *Senior leader*

Taking risks

Part of teachers' experience of feeling more trusted and validated was being empowered, able to take risks, and being pushed out of their comfort zone. This is often referenced in tandem with pupils becoming more confident risk takers.

> Like, I think a big one for me was sort of like stepping back, so that the children could all action these creative skills. I think this day and age, because life is so busy… that you do everything for the kids, and they're not learning how to do things for themselves. So I've been trying to do that in school so that the children have the time for reflection, have the time to get set up and ready, and start thinking a bit more like taking that ownership really; risk taking is a big one, even for me because I am quite a control freak. So you know, if I'm demonstrating and modelling that, you know, it's okay to take risks. *Teacher*

Relationships and collaboration

Teachers valued the opportunity to see and learn about children as individuals, and as a result built stronger relationships and learned more from their pupils. Teachers had their assumptions challenged and aspirations raised through learning more about what pupils can do and achieve. Linked to this, teachers felt their understanding of what pupils need for their futures and how to prepare them increased.

Teachers also referenced building new relationships and networks across a variety of settings (including between primary and secondary schools), encouraging more collaborative working, professional dialogue and a sense of being part of a wider learning community.

Outcomes of Teaching for Creativity for whole school communities

By the end of year three of the pilot phase, Collaboratives had more clarity and confidence about whole school culture change and what this looked like in a range of contexts. The two strongest themes overall were Teaching for Creativity becoming increasingly prioritised and embedded within whole-school strategy and values, and more widespread implementation of creative practice and pedagogies. In the last phase of data analysis, changes in curriculum design; Teaching for Creativity being recognised as a vehicle for school improvement; and schools developing a shared language for and understanding of creativity were the most prominent whole school outcomes reported.

Senior leaders and teachers reflected on the journey schools had been on in developing shared understanding and, related to this, the importance of making creative skills more explicit.

> …what the Creativity Collaboratives has enabled us to do is to make learning explicit. So, I think some of the work that the teachers practice was happening anyway. But we weren't being explicit about what skills we were maybe developing in the children and also in the staff themselves. *Senior leader*

There was some evidence around increased investment from senior leaders, and the importance of senior leaders' role in driving creative vision, values and shared understanding. There was recognition of the time this takes, for example:

> As a school leader… it's about having the faith that actually, it's not all about delivering to an outcome within a year. This is about really important practice that is deeply embedded in individuals who can carry it on wherever they go. *Senior leader*

In some schools increasing acknowledgment of the importance of creativity for the 'whole child' was a catalyst for creative approaches beginning to create change across a whole school.

Examples of school-wide culture shifts include: Teaching for Creativity being written into school improvement plans; creativity influencing whole school policies (for example feedback and marking policies); and Teaching for Creativity linking into whole school strategies.

> As a school leader, it has begun to reframe my thinking when developing whole-school policy. [The] biggest success [has been] working collaboratively to re-write our school feedback policy to ensure it was underpinned by the principles of creativity. *Senior leader*

There were various examples of creative thinking becoming part of a whole-school vision and ethos; and as a result being integrated into curriculum design, planning and delivery.

> Children are picking up on it. So I think that's part of it – that it's an ethos in the school. It's not that we're going to [collaborative] meetings and saying we're doing this and then, and it's just a bit of research that [the creativity champion] is doing and it goes nowhere. I think [we have] that desire that it goes beyond the classroom. *Teacher*

There were also examples of Teaching for Creativity influencing school priorities, such as pupils, teachers and governors valuing the process of learning as well as outputs, and greater recognition of creative skills. Typically though schools did not move away from a knowledge-based curriculum being the central approach.

One school cited that this programme contributed to improving teacher retention and another that Teaching for Creativity became an important part of the staff appraisal process.

Some schools began to consider environments for creativity, in terms of space and time. Examples were given of changes to classroom format and layout visually; utilising outdoor space more; and schools trialling longer lesson lengths, which was often a significant timetable shift.

By year three, many more indications of structural and environmental changes emerged, for example:

- Increased knowledge of assessment systems that incorporate creativity
- Different environments for teaching have been developed across the school
- Staff being timetabled to have regular meetings focused around creativity to introduce new pedagogies
- Creativity being highlighted in planning documents
- Creative habits being incorporated into assemblies
- Children being given awards for skills like inquisitiveness
- Creative practitioners involved beyond Creativity Collaboratives funding being briefed on including creative habits for consistency
- Creative Champions being appointed in each faculty, with funding allocated to develop the Champions scheme
- Topics being renamed as questions
- Every class having a 'creative half hour' as standard
- Sharing updates with parents/carers to raise their awareness of the language of creativity and how it relates to their child's learning

Teachers observed positive outcomes for the whole school community, for example increased understanding of creativity among parents, carers and local partners, and buy-in from governors and/or Multi Academy Trust leadership. There was also evidence of schools looking beyond their immediate community for example through industry engagement and through an enhanced sense of place and placemaking.

There was some evidence of an increased commitment to pupil-led, co-constructed learning and the importance of pupil voice – both in terms of opinion/feedback and the involvement of young leaders advocating for creativity within their schools and communities. In some cases, student voice became 'prescribed' as an explicit part of schemes of work.

The importance of the development of a shared language for creativity was a recurring theme:

> Something that I think we need to do more on still is to continue to embed the language of creativity across the whole school, so when we think about how we're gonna move forward, We're very good at all saying, 'skilled speaking' and 'active listening' and you'll see this consistency with some language through lessons, and I want that to be the same with how we're recognising and highlighting creativity as well. *Senior leader*

Many felt that Creativity Collaboratives was a catalyst for providing opportunities for pupils within and beyond the school, expanding and broadening horizons. There was, in some schools, an increase in 'real world' learning (particularly facilitated through partnerships), where learning took place in the wider community and beyond, for example:

> It was a geography study on pollution and we worked with the local authority, the Air Pollution Help Desk, which was really inspiring for them. And the joy for them… They were able to impress the authority so much they were given £3000 [for the school]. [They] then got invited to present it at the Mayor's Conference… Air Pollution Conference. And so the learning there was enormous and the enthusiasm it was just… it was inspiring to see, so definitely it's something. *Senior leader*

In some Collaboratives there was increased commitment to and interest in outdoor learning, including 'beach school'.

In several cases, whole-school changes were planned for the year following the pilot phase, for example incorporating creativity into school-wide planning frameworks/templates; involving governors in reflecting on creativity as part of school ethos; and developing new creative foci such as creativity within SEND provision.

> So now, for us is to make sure that every single one [teacher] is on this journey… we want to take them on board, which will mean it is now in my School Development Plan… Governors are such busy people, but once it's in there [the School Development Plan], I will have to then talk about it and then they will have to come on board to evaluate… that's when they will start getting involved. *Headteacher*

Case studies

In summer term 2024, Abigail D'Amore Associates visited 11 schools, met teachers from two others via online interviews, and were provided with interview data from one of the Collaboratives. As a result of this, we compiled the following case studies to provide a snapshot of the approaches and outcomes across a sample of schools.

C Change Collaborative

Everton Free School

Context

Everton Free School is an alternative provision for students aged 13-16 excluded from mainstream education. 75% of students have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities and 93% are registered for pupil premium.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

The school redeveloped their Year 9 curriculum as part of their involvement in the C Change Creativity Collaborative, focusing on using experiential learning to foster creativity. This included increasing understanding of creativity among staff and students, implementing cross-curricular collaboration with staff, promoting collaborative learning and peer assessments with students, and encouraging research and inquiry to introduce new strategies like storytelling as a teaching tool. They also addressed 'cultural capital' by taking students into community settings to enhance 'real-world' learning.

The Year 9 curriculum redevelopment became a vehicle for implementing creativity across the whole school community. With experiential learning at its core, themed trips and outreach were planned to link to the core curriculum.

Specific tools and activities included 'Think, pair, share' as a tool for increasing the amount of collaboration in classrooms; peer assessment; and creativity-based focus groups in English and Science. Staff were also trained in 'storytelling' as a teaching tool.

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

Students at the school tend to prefer what they perceive as 'safe' learning and enjoy known routines, and staff wanted to develop a holistic approach to learning that allowed students to think creatively in a way that did not threaten this sense of safety or routine. There was a particular desire to support Year 9 learners, whose achievement is generally lower than older pupils; the school wanted to find ways of addressing this through creativity. The core of teaching staff have served the school for a long time, and some have become fatigued with CPD; the school wanted to re-energise staff, develop staff as creative thinkers, and move away from traditional perceptions of creativity. Another motivation was the opportunity to develop 'cultural capital' as many students haven't left their immediate locality before, so haven't experienced the cultural diversity of Liverpool.

> We wanted them to come into the building five days a week, enjoy being in the building and enjoy learning. *Teacher*

Outcomes for pupils

The outcomes for pupils included improved attendance and retention. Pupils reported enjoying school, that the new curriculum 'suited them', and stronger relationships with staff. All Year 9 students went on to complete GCSEs and move into further education or other pathways. There was a noticeable increase in student confidence and enjoyment, with students more willing to deliver presentations, lead learning, and engage in feedback. One student successfully reintegrated into mainstream education, another decided they wanted to become an engineer and another has completed three work placements, volunteered at food banks, and wants to continue in education.

> The trips I went on with Jack was a small change in my week but in the long term had a big effect on me. The environment had less pressure and was less intense and I got to show my personality more while having a fun time but still being at school. Being out with Jack showed the City to me and sometimes even the country! We travelled as far as Wales, places I have never been to. These trips improved my social life and social skills as well as my confidence. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

Through fostering a research-based culture, teachers enhanced their research skills, tested possible solutions to problems, and overall felt increased agency and empowerment in their teaching.

Whole school outcomes

The main whole school change was creating a culture of a research-based approach to developing teaching and learning. This became a 'habit' and led to new whole school strategies based around, for example, maths and literacy research. By the end of the pilot phase, there were plans to continue cascading this work.

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre

Context

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre is based in Liverpool and caters for 124 children (Full Time Equivalent) aged 2-5 years.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre explored creative habits in the early years to enhance their existing philosophy, pedagogy, and curriculum, focusing on the needs of their most disadvantaged children. Their goal was to ensure children were motivated, engaged, and equipped with lifelong

learning skills from an early age. Their inquiries included using music sessions to foster creativity, exploring the concept of 'authentic audience' to boost involvement and wellbeing, improving imaginative play and thinking, and using project-based learning to enhance persistence and wellbeing.

They identified a creative champion and creative team who led four research cycles linked to school priorities. Collaboration with parents and carers was key, and teachers explored the 'how' rather than the 'what' of creativity with parents and carers. They used resources that promoted exploration, active learning and critical thinking, and followed a 'plan, do, review' process.

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

The motivation was through addressing children's specific needs, to create an approach that ensured all children had the opportunity to be motivated, engaged and equipped with the skills necessary for lifelong learning. The intention was to support learning experiences and overall wellbeing and development.

Outcomes for pupils

The outcomes for children included: increased wellbeing and self-regulation skills, willingness to try new things, teamwork and communication. Staff also noted improved persistence, problem-solving, questioning abilities, asking for help, and engagement in sustained shared thinking.

Outcomes for teachers

The collaborative culture among teachers fostered a shared language and understanding of creativity, allowing them to reimagine teaching strategies based on evidence. Teachers felt more empowered to take ownership of their professional development and classroom practices. Overall they reported feeling more effective and responsive to children's creative thinking, which enhanced educational experiences and outcomes.

Whole school outcomes

The main school-wide change was a shift towards more teacher collaboration, which fostered shared learning and support.

Wider community outcomes

Parents and carers gained an understanding of the language of creativity and how the approaches used by teachers translated into home situations. This led to early signs of a growth mindset approach at home.

> I want parents to understand how the skills and creativity children acquire will support them throughout their lives, enabling them to be successful lifelong learners. *Creativity Champion*

Conditions for success

Professional development was critical for encouraging reflective practice and continuous professional growth. The setting also valued opportunities to share practice more widely, including with secondary schools, which was possible because of the Creativity Champion role.

Elliot Foundation Collaborative

Billesley Primary School

Context

Billesley Primary is an academy sponsor led primary school for children aged 3-11. It has around 700 pupils with 43% eligible for free school meals.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

The school worked with cultural partners Stan's Cafe and Open Theatre to incorporate creative approaches that were child-led from planning to delivery into the curriculum, and to upskill teachers. Their starting point was that creativity is unique to the individual child, and they wanted to remove the perception that creativity is only about creative arts and artistic skills.

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

Billesley has always been a creative school, with a desire to immerse its pupils in creativity. Creativity Collaboratives was seen as an opportunity to extend this work, by considering how the school could increase its understanding of the word creativity. They wanted to challenge their thinking and drive school improvement through Teaching for Creativity. They also wanted to support pupils' skills in analysis, critical thinking and questioning – to equip them with holistic and not solely academic skills.

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements students agreed with most strongly were "I enjoy doing creative tasks", "I am more interested in learning when we are being creative", and "I have learnt skills that might help me in the future". The statement students agreed with least was "I am more creative out of school since doing this project" and "I can work creatively with other people". Teachers observed social, emotional and learning outcomes, including increases in confidence and self-expression, and pupils becoming better able to recall knowledge.

> You say that creativity, if you can't talk, like creativity, you might create anything that can help other people. So people have a say in what they're doing, so they can see what you're doing. And they can try and do the same. *Pupil*
>
> I think when you're learning when you're being creative I like it because not just makes you learn it makes learning more fun when you're creative, you're learning something what's really creative and fun. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

Teachers had the opportunity to observe and learn skills from expert practitioners working with children with complex social and emotional needs – particularly non-verbal children. As a result, teachers incorporated new strategies into future curriculum design. They also reported becoming more reflective as practitioners.

Whole school outcomes

There were two main school-wide outcomes: Teaching for Creativity became embedded into the school improvement plan, and changes were made to classroom environments as a result of considering how classrooms looked and felt in support of creativity.

Conditions for success

The conditions for success included:

- Working with cultural partners who could offer high quality CPD and challenged teachers to approach activities differently
- Historical and sustained relationships with partners
- Trust being placed in senior leaders and teachers
- Senior leaders' attitudes: being willing to supportively question and challenge; giving time and space to new approaches
- Whole staff involvement
- Commitment to research across the Multi Academy Trust
- Opportunity to share work and practice across a Collaborative
- The Creativity Lead role
- It being a three-year programme

> [On EYFS children] They're not as active, engaged and lively as they are when open theatre comes in, and they are laughing, they're using their voices, it may not be clear in terms of communication, but they're very vocal. And we see a different side to those children in open theatre. *Senior leader*

Rounds Green Primary School

Context

Rounds Green is a mixed primary school with nearly 400 pupils. 35.8% are eligible for Free School Meals

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Rounds Green joined Creativity Collaboratives in the second year with the aim of using arts as a gateway to learning. They put strong emphasis on social and emotional learning. Through working with Open Theatre, they found ways of helping children feel safe to be creative and to be themselves. They identified a core group of 40-50 children from Years 1 to 6 with high social and emotional needs; working with this core group, teachers received training in strategies before taking their learning back to the classroom. The focus with Open Theatre was on non-verbal approaches.

> When you say creative, people automatically think of art, music, dance, drama, and they'll go to the art subjects. I know that some staff would probably still say that, but I think it's more about creativity of thought, rather than the arts, but that has to come from, I'm gonna go back to, children have got to feel safe, secure, but it also gives children an emotional outlet.
> *Senior leader*

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

The school has a high proportion of children with complex needs, particularly in relation to neurodiversity, and is in an area with significant deprivation. 20% of children are newly arrived in the UK, and 37 languages are spoken across the school community. The school has also been on a journey of improvement, from being placed in Special Measures in 2017 when all aspects of the school were deemed Unsatisfactory. The Headteacher was already involved in working with the arts to enhance and recover the curriculum, and ensure it was broad and balanced. Their hope was to develop a deeper understanding of children, to develop trust, and to help children – especially those with social and emotional needs – to get the best out of their time at the school. Many of the children have experienced trauma, so an approach that centred safety was important. They were also interested in how creativity could support community cohesion.

> We were fully invested in having such a programme because we knew it would have the impact, [on individual children], but also other children who may well have become like the invisible child within the classroom that need that opportunity to open up, share their feelings, emotions…. *Teacher*

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements students agreed with most strongly were "When you are being creative it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them", "I enjoy doing creative tasks" and "My teachers are creative." Outcomes observed by teachers included increased confidence, greater self-expression, reduced anxiety and withdrawal, improved non-verbal communication, increased engagement, and learning about turn-taking. This pupil talked about how they can do things in their own way while being creative:

> "I can do colouring in my own way, in like different colours and stuff, and making things."

Outcomes for teachers

Involvement in the programme encouraged teachers to review how they were delivering the curriculum and how they could be more creative in their approaches. It also helped staff better support children with Special Education Needs and Disabilities, for example using non-verbal cues and careful selection of keywords.

Whole school outcomes

The main whole school outcome was brokering meaningful partnerships.

Conditions for success

The conditions for success included:

- Time to build partnerships with cultural partners
- The opportunity to attend Collaborative meetings, share ideas, and listen to how other schools have approached Teaching for Creativity
- Time and headspace dedicated to considering creativity across the curriculum
- Having school staff working alongside and observing the nuance of creative practitioners' delivery
- Ethos and culture of the school: commitment from senior leaders to 'making it work'
- The strength of doing this as part of a Multi Academy Trust which gave creativity a high profile

Shirestone Academy

Context

Shirestone Academy is a mixed primary school for over 200 pupils aged 3-11. 53.6% are eligible for Free School Meals.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

The school's approach centred around drama based activities with cultural partners Sampad. They worked together to review different areas of the curriculum and bring different aspects to life with creativity, particularly storytelling. Teachers participated in and modelled activities alongside children. Part of this work was making place-based connections, and tapping into the cultural heritage of the local area.

> I think we do a lot of things in a creative way, any type of event, we always try to make it creative so that the children remember it more. Because anything we've, we've learned that anything we do creatively, they remember, and they link to learning, and it's more effective. So we try to put as much into every lesson as we can. *Teacher*

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

The school's goal was to consider how the arts could support curriculum development and support children's holistic development. A priority was for pupils to be safe given the context of high levels of trauma. As a small school, it was previously a challenge to have time to research and access appropriate specialisms.

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements students agreed with most strongly were "My teachers are creative", "I am more interested in learning when we are being creative", and "I can be creative in my own way in school". Teachers also observed an increased sense of enjoyment and participation among pupils. For children with additional needs, cognitive load was eased which helped make learning more memorable. Pupils seeing their teachers participating, having access to new role models, and celebrating a range of cultures were important factors in unlocking outcomes.

Pupils reported feeling more able to make mistakes, which matched teachers observations of increased resilience.

> It's okay to make mistakes in class like in a lesson. Like if we don't understand one question and we make a mistake putting down the answer. And then it's fine because we're gonna learn from doing what we've done wrong. And then maybe soon we can get it right. *Pupil*
>
> I like learning when it's creative, because you get more into the lesson and it feels like that you're actually taking more part than doing a lesson that's not creative. *Pupil*
>
> I like doing creative stuff because they can do whatever you want. And it's really fun making them and I like being challenged. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

Teachers felt that their eyes were opened to new possibilities and that through 'stepping into children's shoes' in training, their empathy increased for how children feel when asked to be creative. They also reported enjoying CPD more, and that it gave them strategies to use across the curriculum.

Whole school outcomes

Staff felt that as a result of Creativity Collaboratives providing a 'focal point', Teaching for Creativity became embedded and perceived as integral to school culture and ethos.

Conditions for success

The conditions for success included:

- Training and professional development with external expert practitioners
- The Multi Academy Trust brokering partnerships with cultural organisations
- Whole-staff involvement and 'buy-in'
- Trust and respect between teachers and senior leaders
- Opportunities to be reflective and share practice as a staff team and across the Collaborative
- Partners spending time understanding the school before starting delivery, and therefore having an aligned ethos
- Having a dedicated member of staff to lead the work
- Giving teachers time and space to try new things

> It really isn't an add-on... It's enhancing our practice. But essentially, it's something that you've got to do really well for it to be able to enhance what you're doing. So you almost need someone dedicated to do it. *Senior leader*

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network

Cragside Primary School

Context

Cragside is a foundation primary school in Newcastle with over 400 pupils and a relatively low percentage of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium. It was rated Outstanding at its last Ofsted inspection (2014).

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Cragside adopted a child-led approach to using the Creative Habits of Mind wheel. They took time to unpick what creativity meant, starting with looking at where creativity already featured within the curriculum and gradually adapted existing practice, pedagogy and resources. Creativity Collaboratives enabled them to make creative learning explicit, using vocabulary from the Creative Habits across the school with pupils, and developing children as creativity champions and advocates. They adopted approaches akin to 'Mantle of the Expert', i.e. methods that were collaborative, open-ended, and exploratory. They linked their creative work with wider rethinking of the curriculum and oracy. Their aim was to give children more space to talk, question and wonder, and include more visible creative routines.

> So persistent means like daring to be different and, and like tolerating uncertainty, I think, and like, sticking with difficulties. And discipline means crafting and improving. And like reflecting critically. And inquisitive means exploring, investigating, and challenging assumptions. *Pupil*

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

With the belief that the National Curriculum does not always afford enough opportunities for creativity, the main motivation was to make creativity more accessible especially for the most disadvantaged children. The school wanted to take Creativity Collaboratives forward as a whole school community, embracing something that would enrich school-wide practice, and leading to positive outcomes for pupils and staff as a result.

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements students agreed most strongly with were, "When you are being creative it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them", "I enjoy doing creative tasks", and "I can work creatively with other people". There was least agreement that students felt in control and confident when being creative. Teachers noted improved resilience, persistence, collaboration and participation. Pupils were also observed by teachers as being more disciplined, happier to ask questions, and more inquisitive. Teachers shared how pupils with English as an Additional Language developed an improved vocabulary through being in a creative environment with less pressure.

It's like use your brain a lot and you like use your imagination and be creative. *Pupil*

Well, what I did was someone learning because I think that being creative means things about learning something new. Like Maths, History, Science, they're all something that you could do to learn and be creative about. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

Teachers' understanding of creativity and particularly the Creative Habits of Mind increased, and they learnt about a wider range of pedagogies. As a result, their sense of enjoyment increased, and they felt more excited and motivated by planning and delivering lessons. Enthusiasm increased for making lessons more engaging.

Whole school outcomes

Cragside staff felt that creativity became embedded. It became more explicit, with displays in classrooms raising profile and visibility. There was also a culture of growth and continual learning for teachers, and a new energy for adopting new practice and pedagogy.

There's that honesty, you're allowed to not be great at everything, but you can improve even as an experienced teacher. And I think that encourages more people to try delivering in a more creative way, you know, to just try doing a lesson slightly differently. So, we found the energy is quite contagious. Has been a helpful structure to explore teaching and learning. *Headteacher*

Wider community outcomes

The school felt that they were beginning to see wider community impact through messages about creativity reaching parents and carers (for example as creativity became recognised in 'house points' which pupils would share at home).

Conditions for success

The school identified a range of conditions for success that underpinned their work:

- Supportive Senior Leadership Team, who gave permission, for example, to not use books in every lesson. They created a culture of trust, of 'giving things a go', and less pressure to evidence extensively.
- Activities that are accessible for all children.
- Staff training and CPD, particularly focusing on rethinking the curriculum and on being creative. Dedicated training days were offered for planning.
- Having the opportunity to work with other schools, learn from others, and 'bounce ideas around'
- Access to experts, and being able to 'drip feed' ideas from experts through to the whole staff
- Having access to creativity frameworks and theories
- The whole staff group being able to move forward together

- Having a creativity lead in place

- Having a Theory of Change in place to guide the work

- Links with other whole school initiatives, i.e. work with Chartered College of Teaching on Rethinking Curriculum

- Connecting on a national level with other Creativity Collaboratives

> As a school leader… it's about having the faith that actually, it's not all about delivering to an outcome within a year. This is about really important practice that is deeply embedded in individuals who can carry it on wherever they go, whether they're in Cragside, or whether they're somewhere else. *Senior Leader*

Sunningdale School

Context

Sunningdale is Sunderland's only specialist school for children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties aged 2-11. 48.5% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals, which is above average.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Sunningdale staff felt there had always been a reflective inquiry approach to practice across the school, including exploring how to develop 'functional learning'. They saw Teaching for Creativity as a central theme to their work; not just as a result of Creativity Collaboratives, but the programme enabled them to evolve creative approaches and ethos, create a more structured way of working, and unpick creativity at a 'micro level'. They also already had an established play-based pedagogy. Through Creativity Collaboratives they focused on children 'tolerating uncertainty'; a functional role play 'village' and the development of a coastal and outdoor school curriculum.

> We're talking about the Einstein sense of creativity, not Picasso. And it's like that idea of trying to shift people's thinking from creativity just being creative arts, and thinking more around thinking, problem solving, how, what is creative thinking? And what does that really look like for our children? *Senior leader*

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

The school's ambition was to have a unique curriculum, and to develop systems that were particularly effective for children with the most complex needs (including autism with high support needs; comorbid conditions and cognitive impairment). This built on Sunningdale's decision in 2020 not to follow the National Curriculum, and instead to focus on preparation for adulthood, playing a role in community, developing relationships and accessing employment. As an innovative school trying bold new things, they were keen to be part of a network of schools via Creativity Collaboratives, to feel less alone as trailblazers, engage in professional dialogue and be challenged in their practice. For pupils, they wanted to support their thought processes in making sense of the world.

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements students agreed most strongly with were "I like playing with other people" and "I enjoy playing". The statements they disagreed with most were "I like coming to school" and "I can learn from mistakes." Students also articulated how they enjoy playing, giving specific examples of the play-based activity they do within school, and how their teachers help them and/or join in with playing.

Outcomes for teachers

Being part of Creativity Collaboratives helped staff to better understand and articulate the ways in which they were already using Teaching for Creativity, the purpose of working this way, and the outcomes. As a result, there was an increase in confidence among teachers.

> If you had asked some of our staff in the past, "What is creativity?" they might have talked about sticking crepe paper on a balloon or something, or – I'm being really facetious there – but it's kind of, they might have got as far as kind of building something in the classroom out of cardboard boxes, which is moving in the right direction of what we're looking for around creative problem solving. But I think it helps kind of solidify that, as when we talk about creativity, we're not talking about expressive arts. What we're talking about is can the child problem solve? You know, can they apply skills? Can they apply thinking? Can they apply literacy? Can we apply numeracy? Can they cross contextualise? Those kinds of things. That's a big one for us. *Senior leader*

Whole school outcomes

Creativity Collaboratives tied into the school's ethos and culture of reflection and constantly 'asking why', and helped to both drive and embed new thinking. More specifically, it helped provide a school-wide language for pre-existing work, enabled them to create clearer definitions, and helped structure a way of thinking and working. The programme also became a way for staff to challenge themselves about what the outcomes were, through inviting visitors into the school and opening up dialogue about impact.

Conditions for success

The conditions for success included:

- The importance of network to share ideas and thoughts with like-minded practitioners
- Developing a shared language across the Collaborative
- Having opportunities to reflect
- Finding collaborators to constructively challenge them, particularly in relation to purpose
- Opportunities to visit other schools and learn from different settings

The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative

Central Foundation School

Context

Central Foundation is a mainstream secondary school for girls based in Tower Hamlets, inner London. There are approximately 1500 students and the majority are from a Muslim background.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Opportunities for risk taking, critical thinking and debate are some of the most important priorities in determining which approaches the school chooses. Teachers value that Teaching for Creativity allows them to offer space and freedom. They describe "giving children as much opportunity to make their own choices, decisions and figure things out as much as they can."

Examples of activities used are:

- 'Speed dating' as a collaborative revision technique in A Level science lessons (students are given questions about key exam knowledge – they have time to devise an answer before sharing their questions and answers in pairs).

- Creating stories/storyboards depicting RAM and ROM memory types in a Year 9 ICT lesson, in order to understand and internalise differences between the two.

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

Central Foundation views Creativity Collaboratives as one approach of several they have adopted in recent years, in support of their commitment to developing students' personal attributes as much as supporting them to achieve excellent exam results through knowledge acquisition.

> Exam outcomes are important for transforming their lives, but we also know particularly in the context we work in that it's important to develop personal attributes as well. So I think our commitment to creativity is partly driven by that, by that vision, by those values. We get fantastic results here and we're really proud of them. But we're also proud of a lot of the extracurricular work we do, and a lot of the ways that we develop those different attributes in students… This [Teaching for Creativity] is one of the strings to that bow, it becomes part of that suite of tools that we use to develop our young people. *Senior Leader*

> Prior to Creativity Collaboratives they had begun developing active participation in lessons (for example more class discussion rather than "sending and receiving" information from teachers to students), which was seen as a strong foundation for Creativity Collaboratives. Their goal at the outset was for "students to be more creative, and that if they were they would be more active in their learning, and they would have a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the contents of the curriculum" *Senior Leader*

Outcomes for pupils

During evaluation workshops, the statements pupils agreed most strongly with were that when they are being creative "it is ok to make mistakes and learn from them" and that they "feel happy" when they do creative tasks. They reflected on mistakes being an opportunity to explore possibilities with freedom. They suggested that it's easy to be creative in school, but much harder because of pressures on their time to be creative outside of school.

> In essence, it makes it more engaging, more enticing. It's something different that we've never done before. *Pupil*

Teachers observed Teaching for Creativity making a difference to engagement and intrinsic motivation for learning. They also referenced pupils working together and solving problems collectively, which is mirrored in student discussion around the benefits of creativity in fostering a more comfortable environment that's conducive to them becoming closer with classmates.

> I think it's had a huge impact… one of the strategies I use is more group work. So you get them to solve problems, work together, make something as a team, and they have to play different roles in that team. Set up in the right way they feel like they're doing something that's playful, and that they've got quite a lot of control over. They feel they've got freedom… and they also really enjoy it. They feel real pride, being able to have something they've made together rather than [what] the teacher told them they had to do. *Teacher*

One teacher reported that trialling and adopting new approaches (for example student-led feedback) resulted in a notable improvement in A Level results.

Outcomes for teachers

The main impact for teachers was an increase in Teaching for Creativity skills, and more opportunity and freedom to experiment with new ways of working.

Whole school outcomes

Central Foundation uses a framework called Central Skills that was developed before Creativity Collaboratives began and has five categories: Curiosity & Creativity, Problem Solving, Analytical Thinking, Communication, and Adaptability. With staff realising that all five skills relate to creativity, the framework was the 'hook' for Teaching for Creativity becoming widely used. There are several ways in which the use of Central Skills enabled Teaching for Creativity to become widespread, for example the framework is displayed on all classroom walls; student achievement points are linked to Central Skills being demonstrated in their learning; and department leads reference Central Skills in their planning.

About one third of staff were involved in Creativity Collaboratives and as a result one of the most widest-spread changes was more creative 'do now' activities.

Conditions for Success

The conditions for success at Central Foundation were:

- The Creative Skills framework as an existing 'hook' for Creativity Collaboratives.
- A culture of prioritising success measures beyond exam results.
- Training from an inspiring partner organisation (National Theatre).
- An Inquiry Group model, which was established prior to Creativity Collaboratives.
- Internal advocacy and communication in the form of a Learning and Development Newsletter.
- Sharing and developing a suite of concrete activities and practical strategies – with time to develop and implement these, and ownership of this process by subject leads and teachers.
- Opportunities to learn about Teaching for Creativity through, for example, reports, conferences and training.
- Moving from one annual observation to three annual learning walks (which has encouraged more risk-taking), and opportunities to see other teachers modelling practice.

Hampden Gurney Church of England Primary School

Context

Hampden Gurney is a Church of England primary school in Westminster. There are around 220 pupils, with a higher than average proportion of pupils with English as an Additional Language. The school has a history of excellent academic results.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

Game-based learning was a key feature of Teaching for Creativity at Hampden Gurney, for example learning about global trade through teams of students creating and trading between their own imagined countries. Free writing and creative writing were also commonly referenced by pupils. Space for pupils to have freedom and make mistakes was key to their philosophy.

The motivation for developing Teaching for Creativity

With a solid foundation of strong academic achievement, the Headteacher was looking for ways to extend pupils' learning, and they saw Creativity Collaboratives as an opportunity to do this. At the start of the programme, they acknowledged the need to develop knowledge and understanding of what Teaching for Creativity is, so they consciously focused on staff learning and development in year one.

Outcomes for pupils

The main outcomes for pupils teachers reported were increased engagement, interest in learning, and a sense of fun. This includes pupils feeling greater ownership over their work and becoming more motivated as a result. During the evaluation workshop, the statements pupils agreed most strongly with were: "Creativity helps me to express things that words can't" and "I am more interested in learning when we are being creative".

> So creativity for me is to make you think outside the box. Because not everything will be told to you, you have to discover them for yourself. And it makes you feel more excited and interested, because you get to design it your way. *Pupil*

Teachers found that it became easier to include all pupils through removing hierarchical approaches to how pupils think and learn. Often this meant that nobody was taken out of class for intervention and no catch-up time was required.

Pupils themselves talked about the benefits in terms of sparking imagination, ideas, and thinking outside the box. One child expressed creativity as a way to think independently, and another said they felt more confident as a result. Pupils see creativity as something for their whole life (and any kind of future job/career), as well as making school more fun.

> Just to have self-independence. So, I can think for myself, I'm not just relying on other people. Because sometimes when I'm older, I won't have everyone to help me and surround me. So, I have to think for myself. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

Teachers, particularly those early in their career, strongly valued professional development opportunities that took them beyond the classroom. As a result they began to find their intrinsic creativity; they became more responsive to pupils' feedback; and they experienced a sense of fun that counteracted the pressures of, for example, Ofsted inspections and exam results.

Whole school outcomes

The Headteacher and three teachers directly involved in action research felt new approaches and mindsets – mainly a greater sense of freedom and flexibility – became more embedded in how they teach every day.

A goal for the pilot phase was producing research to support Governors to understand the impact of Teaching for Creativity. By the end of year three, this was beginning to happen and was leading to creativity becoming more explicitly incorporated into school-wide planning.

Conditions for Success

The conditions for success at Hampden Gurney include:

- Enough funding for lessons to be well enough resourced with Teaching Assistants.
- Developing a formative assessment framework based around the Creative Habits of Mind.
- Training with external providers (e.g. National Theatre).
- Active involvement from the Headteacher (who led the action research).
- A foundational year to build knowledge, resources and confidence.
- A shared and clear definition of creativity/Teaching for Creativity.
- An already established environment of "good behaviour and respect".

Lady Margaret School

Context

Lady Margaret is a secondary school for girls in West London. It was rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2023 and was the Sunday Times London comprehensive school of the year 2024. The school is oversubscribed and has around 750 students. In terms of ethnicity and socio-economic status, the school is very diverse.

Teaching for Creativity approach and activities

The school started its Creativity Collaboratives work by focusing on extracurricular activity; they began a lunchtime set design club (where pupils were involved in set design for the school show). In years two and three, their work developed to include Teaching for Creativity within the curriculum. Examples of curriculum activities included a PE lesson in which pupils designed new games in groups and an A Level psychology lesson where students were devising and assessing exam questions themselves. A pupil recalled an English lesson in which they used riddles based on themes and characters to prompt their memory on quotes from *Lord of the Flies.*

They explored a wide range of approaches as teachers were given freedom and time to research how they would like to work. Some already had approaches they wanted to test further, others based theirs on new research, and some on training from external partners like the National Theatre.

Outcomes for pupils

During the evaluation workshop, the statements pupils agreed with most strongly were "Creativity helps you to express things words can't" and "I enjoy doing creative tasks". They also commonly refer to having independence and being able to do things their way. This has resulted in them becoming more likely to opt for creative ways of working when given the choice. Pupils also felt creativity has helped ease pressure they feel from exams.

The outcomes observed by teachers were:

- **Engagement:** extracurricular activities seem to have increased student engagement in lessons (based on an increase in 'Progress in Learning Scores', which combine effort and attainment), and teachers think pupils now have longer attention space, and retain information and ideas more effectively.

- **Learning outcomes:** one teacher comparing classes who have experienced Teaching for Creativity and those that hadn't, felt creative approaches improved learning outcomes.

- **Outcomes for pupils' future careers:** for example autonomy, self-awareness, collaboration and resilience.

> I think when we have lessons that are very content based, it can be very one dimensional, which makes it hard for you to actually take in information. When you see a bunch of words on the board, and you're copying it down… those words don't stick in my brain… But I feel like when we do a lesson that's creative, and actually working with what we're being taught, I actually learn it. *Pupil*

Outcomes for teachers

The main outcome for teachers was a marked increase in confidence to apply Teaching for Creativity. Senior Leaders think that there has been greater benefit in opening up longer-standing teachers to new ways of working, versus Early Career Teachers who are used to trying different ideas.

Whole school outcomes

Creativity has become part of already established processes. Prior to Creativity Collaboratives, the school had an established cycle of research and development groups – Teaching for Creativity was the chosen focus for research and development during the Creativity Collaboratives programme, and was led by a Deputy Headteacher. All staff became involved in Teaching for Creativity, and five staff led cross-curricular research groups based on themes suggested by them.

Another established process was 'Round Three Observations' which involved teachers dropping into other lessons and completing a proforma about what's working well and what could be better – again the focus during Creativity Collaboratives was on creative practices. Through this, practice and ideas were shared widely.

Creativity is one of 'five Cs' in the school development plan from September 2024.

Conditions for Success

The conditions for success at Lady Margaret were:

- Already established Research and Development Groups and observation cycles that Teaching for Creativity can be woven into. One teacher described it as a "Culture of R&D"

- Establishing a 'marketplace' for sharing ideas and examples amongst teachers.

- Leadership and organisation from the Collaborative lead school, which enabled connections and learning across multiple schools.

- Having evaluation findings reflected back to the school to support understanding of effective approaches.

- Time and space in the day for teachers to learn and plan.

- Parameters and structure that create the space and safety for pupils to contribute.

- Pupils understanding that creative approaches directly link to learning for exams and can have a positive impact on exam outcomes.

Creativity Collaboratives: School examples at a glance

The following information collected from various data sources provides a snapshot glance of how some schools within the Creativity Collaboratives network engaged with Teaching for Creativity.

C Change Collaborative				
Everton Free School in The Wirral, is an alternative provision for students aged 13-16 excluded from mainstream education. It has 75% of students with SEND and 93% on pupil premium.				
Teaching for creativity approach	**Observed outcomes**			**Conditions for success**
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Staff identified that students tend to prefer what they perceive as 'safe' learning, and staff wanted to develop a holistic approach to learning that allowed students to think creatively in a non-threatening way. They re-developed the Year 9 curriculum, focusing on using experiential learning to foster creativity. This included increasing understanding of creativity among staff and students, implementing cross-curricular collaboration with staff, promoting collaborative learning and peer assessments with students, and encouraging research and inquiry to introduce new strategies like storytelling as a teaching tool. They also addressed 'cultural capital' by taking students into community settings to enhance real-world learning.	Increased confidence and enjoyment. More willing to present, lead learning and engage in feedback. Improved attendance and retention. Improved academic attainment at GCSE.	Improved research skills. Teachers felt more empowered. Improved teacher agency.	Developed a culture of a research-based approach.	*Not shared*

C Change Collaborative

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Birkenhead, The Wirral. It has 281 pupils, with 13% on pupil premium and 9.9% with SEND.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
The school aimed to enhance children's collaboration, wondering, and questioning skills and address a post-Covid lack of imagination particularly among Reception children. They conducted four teacher inquiry research cycles focused on collaboration, inquisitiveness, discipline, and imagination. Initially, specific subjects (maths and RE) were chosen, and teachers tested signature pedagogies linked to Creative Habits of Mind.	Improved collaborative working. Improved questioning skills. Increased focus and concentration. Pupils able to talk about learning and understand what they need to do to help them improve. Pupils understand and use the language of creativity. Improved academic attainment in maths.	Increased confidence in understanding and embedding creativity, including using the language of creativity. More comfortable with taking risks. Improved research skills. More reflective and collaborative practitioners.	Developed a shared language of creativity. Staff feel more valued. Increase in team teaching and sharing practice across key stages. Research tied into whole school priorities.	Time and capacity for shared planning – across schools and within departments/teams. Opportunity for staff to decide together what the research focus should be – encouraged ownership. Culture of collaborative working facilitated with staff. Access to creativity frameworks, pedagogies and toolkits. Availability of classroom resources and materials.

C Change Collaborative

Everton Nursery School and Family Centre in Liverpool caters for 124 FTE children aged 2-5 years.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
They explored creative habits in early years to enhance their existing philosophy, pedagogy, and curriculum, focusing on the needs of their most disadvantaged children. Their goal was to ensure children were motivated, engaged, and equipped with lifelong learning skills from an early age. A series of teacher-led inquiries included using music sessions to foster creativity, exploring the concept of 'authentic audience' to boost involvement and wellbeing, improving imaginative play and thinking, and using project-based learning to enhance persistence and wellbeing.	Increased wellbeing including self-regulation. More willing to try new things. Improved collaboration and teamwork. Improved persistence, problem-solving and questioning.	Increased understanding of creativity including the language of creativity. Teachers felt more effective and responsive to children's creative thinking, enhancing educational experiences and outcomes.	Promoted a collaborative culture among teachers, fostering shared learning and support. Parents/carers gained an understanding of the language of creativity, leading to early signs of a growth mindset approach at home.	Consistent and relevant CPD. Opportunities to share, learn and reflect with other schools and settings.

C Change Collaborative

Kelsall Primary School is a rural primary school in Cheshire with 267 pupils ranging from 2-11yrs. There is a relatively low number of SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Kelsall built on their existing work in STEAM, expeditionary, and project-based learning. The Creativity Collaborative supported them with frameworks, tools, and a network to help redefine creativity in the school and engage all staff. Teacher-led inquiries focused around school priorities, including engagement, independence, metacognition, play, enjoyment, and imagination. They developed a structured approach of Thinking/Exploring/Explaining to help pupils reflect on their thinking, created a shared language of creativity among staff, and built a 'creativity library' of recommended reading. They turned the Creative Habits of Mind sub-habits into working questions to help children think about how they were developing these.	Overall Improvements in metacognition, wellbeing, engagement and ideas generation. Improved quality of writing. Pupils were able to openly discuss resilience and persistence during an Ofsted inspection, with one pupil describing the school as 'daring and different.'	Increased confidence in planning Teaching for Creativity. Increased understanding of pupils' capabilities. Improved skills in research.	Although time-consuming, this process led to reasonable success in embedding learning across the school with the Creative Habits being modelled in every classroom. Open-ended tasks have now become a key part of pedagogies to develop pupil confidence, wellbeing and metacognition.	Cycles of research, evaluation and reflection. Teaching for Creativity being aligned with whole-school priorities. Whole staff involvement including SLT, where all recognise and value creativity. Having a 'creative lead'.

C Change Collaborative

St Mary's Catholic College in Wallesey, The Wirral is an 11-18 secondary school with 1122 pupils. 43% are eligible for free school meals

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
The school identified a cultural, experiential, and vocabulary deficit among students, worsened by COVID-19, with a wellbeing survey revealing students' unhappiness in school. There was a commitment to creativity, which was being explored through the Inspire Curriculum which had been developed with businesses around creative skills, but this was restricted to arts subjects not a whole-school initiative. They used the Creative Habits as a framework for developing lifelong learning skills across the school. A phased approach began with fostering creativity among students and staff, evolving the Inspire programme beyond arts subjects. Focus areas included vision, language, tools, and professional development for teachers. A daily 25-minute session on Creative Habits was introduced, creating a consistent thread through the school. Phase 3 involved developing teaching and learning pedagogy, with a playbook and toolkit to scaffold lessons, engage, and assess learners.	Pupils now articulate Creative Habits. Improved relationships with peers and teachers. Increased wellbeing.	Working more collaboratively. Improved relationships with pupils. Increased understanding of Teaching for Creativity within their language and planning.	Have grown and cascaded the practice based on Creative Habits and shared with all staff through teaching and learning briefings. All staff now focus on inquiry as part of the appraisal process. Culture of CPD, sharing of good practice, opportunities to watch and coach others been developed. Enabled ongoing discussions about teaching and learning and the impact it has on pupils.	Acknowledgement that this is a long process and doesn't happen overnight – incremental steps to change. Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting.

The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative

Hampden Gurney is a CofE primary school in Westminster with around 220 pupils. There is a much higher than average percentage of pupils with English as an Additional Language but much lower than average Pupil Premium and SEN.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
The school is very proud of its academic achievement, and the Headteacher is always looking for ways of extending students' learning – they felt Creativity Collaboratives could be a way of doing this. They weren't sure at the beginning what creativity meant and it took 8 months of work and research to establish the foundations of knowledge and understanding to progress. Creative approaches such as game-based learning, free and creative writing were adopted as a way of extending students' learning. This followed an initial period of staff exploring and researching what creativity meant, establishing the foundations of knowledge and understanding to progress.	Improved engagement and enjoyment. More ownership over work leading to increased motivation and interest in learning. Pupils feel more imaginative, able to share ideas and think outside the box.	More responsive to pupils' feedback about what's working and what isn't. Sense of fun that counteracts the pressures of Ofsted and SATs results. Professional development opportunities beyond the classroom, particularly for teachers earlier in their career e.g. presenting action research to colleagues. Teachers began to find their intrinsic creativity.	Creative approaches and mindsets have become more embedded. Headteacher advocating more for creativity, including with Governors.	Existing tools and frameworks adapted and 'owned' by individual Collaboratives. Enough funding for lessons to be well enough resourced in terms of TAs. Consistent and relevant CPD with external partners. Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches. Acknowledgement that this is a long process and doesn't happen overnight – incremental steps to change. Vision and strategy for creativity in the school. An already established environment of good behaviour, respect etc.

The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative

Central Foundation School in Tower Hamlets (London) is a mainstream secondary school for girls with approximately 1500 students.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Teaching for Creativity was one approach of several the school adopted in support of their commitment to developing students' personal attributes. They adapted and deepened their existing 'Central Skills' framework and related it to creativity as a school-wide initiative. Staff had time to explore how the central skills of Curiosity and Creativity, Problem Solving, Analytical Thinking, Communication, and Adaptability could lead to increased student choice and agency. Central Skills are now displayed on classroom walls; student achievement points are linked to Central Skills being demonstrated in their learning; and department leads reference Creative Skills in their planning.	Increased engagement with, enjoyment of and motivation for learning. More effective collaboration and teamwork. Improved problem solving and resilience. Improved academic attainment at A level.	Improved skills, confidence and opportunity for trying out new ways of working.	Increase in use of creative activities across the school. Moving from one annual observation to three annual learning walks (which has encouraged more risk-taking).	Access to creativity frameworks, pedagogies and toolkits. School culture, shared vision and ethos. Access to external industry and creative partners. Cycles of research, evaluation and reflection. Communicating findings regularly (via newsletters). Having a 'creativity lead' in the school. Concrete activities and practical strategies. Having a shared language and increased understanding about Teaching for Creativity. Observing good practice.

The St Marylebone CE School Collaborative

Lady Margaret is a Girls' secondary school in West London rated Outstanding by Ofsted in 2023 and Sunday Times London comprehensive school of the year 2024. It has 758 students (over-capacity by around 200 students) with 12.5% eligible for Free School Meals.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Wide range of approaches used as teachers were given freedom to research how they would like to work. Some already had approaches they wanted to test further, others based theirs on new research, and others on training from external partners like National Theatre. The school started by focusing on extracurricular activity, by starting a set design club (a lunch club where pupils are involved in set design for the school show). Lessons observed included a PE lesson in which pupils were designing new games in groups and an A Level psychology lesson where students were devising and assessing exam questions. Another example was an economics lesson finding creative ways to solve the housing crisis.	Increased engagement in lessons. Development of autonomy, self-awareness, independence, collaborative skills and resilience. Improved focus, concentration and ability to retain information.	A marked increase in confidence to use Teaching for Creativity.	Creativity became part of already established processes and cycles of research. Creativity is one of 'Five Cs' in next year's school development plan. The school thinks about the Five Cs being embedded through everything, from academic attainment to financial management of the school. Next year, SEND is the theme for their Research & Development Group focus, which will prompt a deeper look at creativity for children with additional needs.	Cycles of research, evaluation and reflection. Establishing a 'marketplace' for sharing ideas and examples amongst teachers. Leadership and organisation from the Collaborative lead school, meaning it has been easy to meet and learn from other people across the Collaborative. Time and space in the day. Not having too much freedom. Parameters and structure are important to students feeling able to contribute.

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network

New York Primary School is a Community primary school in North Tyneside with 393 pupils aged between 2-11, with a recent Ofsted rating of Outstanding.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Creativity Collaboratives validated and extended creative work the school was already doing. Staff spent time defining what creativity looked like already in school, focussing on how creativity can be embedded across subjects from EYFS to Year 6. They explored how a range of opportunities for students to have the chance to do things in different ways and approach a topic from different angles, which included place-based work with external partners.	Increased leadership skills and pupil voice.	Improved skills and confidence with embedding creative approaches. More willing to take risks and try new things – feeling they have the freedom and confidence to be able to do that.	Recognition and validation of taking this approach, which they did anyway. Increase in confidence from senior leaders and teachers that this is an approach they want to continue to embed.	Effective partnership working. Having access to experts without the need to travel to learn from them. Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting. Consistent and relevant CPD. Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity.

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network

Shilbottle Primary School is a small rural primary school in Northumberland with 81 pupils aged 4-11 and 22.2% eligible for Free School Meals.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
They joined Creativity Collaboratives in the third year and took incremental steps to develop a shared consistent language for creativity among pupils, staff and families. This involved having the Creative Habits on display, linking weekly celebration assemblies to Creative Habits, using the Creative Habits language in communication with families, and helping children to identify the Creative Habits in themselves and what they needed to deploy those skills, including in work with external partners. They wanted to be able to link the approaches in with other initiatives they were doing – developing a nature park for example – and to use it as one way of supporting wider school priorities, for example an identified lack of resilience among children with writing.	Pupils using language of creativity and applying across their learning. More self-reflective, persistent pupils. Increased confidence and resilience particularly among pupils who aren't considered 'academic'.	Teachers feel more confident in delivery of creative approaches.		Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity. Vision and strategy for creativity in the school. External funding was important for releasing teacher/senior leader time in a small school. Trust in the Headteacher. Accessibility of toolkits and resources. Parent/guardian buy in.

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network

Cragside Primary School, is a foundation primary school In Newcastle with 413 pupils with 7.7% on free school meals.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Cragside adopted a child-led approach using the Creative Habits as a way of making creativity more accessible especially for the most disadvantaged children. They took time to unpick what creativity meant, starting with looking at where creativity already featured within the curriculum and gradually adapting current practice, pedagogy and resources. The language of Creative Habits has been adopted across the school, and they linked the work with wider work being done on rethinking curriculum and oracy. Children were developed as creativity champions, advocating for creative approaches.	Improved resilience, persistence, consideration for how to improve.

More disciplined, inquisitive and better quality of questions.

Improved collaboration skills.

Increased participation.

EAL children developed an improved vocabulary in a creative environment where there is less pressure.

Increased creative capacity of pupils and understanding of using language of creativity in context. | Improved teacher enjoyment.

Increased excitement, enthusiasm and motivation for teaching.

Increased teacher understanding of creativity and different pedagogies.

Staff feeling trusted and having permission to try things. | Creativity is visible across the school.

Creativity has been made more explicit and the profile of creativity has been raised.

Creativity is in house points and pupils can tell their parents.

Linking Teaching for Creativity with other whole school initiatives i.e. work with the Chartered College of Teaching on Rethinking Curriculum. | Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches.

Having activities that are accessible for all children.

Consistent and relevant CPD.

Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting.

Access to external, 'real-world' industry and creative partners.

Access to theories, frameworks and resources.

Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity.

Having a creative lead in the school. |

The North East Creativity Collaborative Network

Sunningdale School is Sunderland's only specialist school for children with severe, profound and multiple learning difficulties aged 2-11, 48.5% of whom are eligible for free school meals

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Teaching for Creativity was already embedded in the school through a reflective inquiry approach with staff, and a play-based pedagogy integrated across their 'preformal', 'explore' and 'semi-formal' pathways. Creativity Collaboratives provided them with a network to share, explore and develop ideas – including strengthening their real-world learning spaces – and enabled them to spend time unpicking every aspect of creativity at a micro-level to deeply consider their children's individual needs. They want to support children to be able to develop creative thought processes in order to help with tolerating uncertainty in the real world.	Enjoyment and engagement with learning and play.	Has helped staff to articulate what they do, why they do it and what impact it has. Increased confidence.	Is linked into the school ethos and culture of reflection permeating everything. Creativity Collaboratives helped to drive and embed some of that thinking. Helped provide and articulate a shared language for what they already do. Been a way of them challenging themselves over what the impact is. Helped to structure a way of working and a way of thinking.	Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting. Common understanding about what creativity means and a shared language for this. Visits to other schools and observing good practice.

The Elliot Foundation Collaborative

Billesley Primary School, Birmingham is an Academy sponsor led primary school for children aged 3-11. There are 698 pupils with 43% eligible for Free School Meals.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Following time exploring what creativity meant, and how it could support the development of immersive curricular, Billesley worked with partners Stan's Cafe and Open Theatre. Pupils participated in a range of creative approaches and teachers were upskilled in how this could be adapted and adopted across the curriculum.	Pupils better able to recall previous knowledge. Improved self-expression. Increased confidence.	Increased staff understanding of and strategies for working with children with social, emotional and complex needs including non-verbal communication. Increased understanding of creativity and what it means. More reflective as practitioners.	Embedded into school improvement plan. Environment changes in classrooms – considered how classroom looked and felt following partner work and intervention.	Fostering an environment where staff and students can take risks and have permission to fail without fear of judgment or accountability. Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches. Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity. Cycles of research, evaluation and reflection. Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting. Having a creative lead in the school. High quality CPD from expert partners.

The Elliot Foundation Collaborative

Rounds Green Primary School, Oldbury, Sandwell has 377 pupils, with 35.8% eligible for Free School Meals

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
The school has a high mobility in terms of pupil movement due to newly arrived children and families. They wanted to use Teaching for Creativity as a way of building on what they already do to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum and deepen and develop understanding of individual children's needs. There was a particular focus on social and emotional learning through a partnership with Open Theatre. A core group of children were identified in terms of social emotional needs, and teachers were trained in strategies that could be used in their classrooms with all pupils.	Increased confidence and self-belief with specific pupils. Reduced anxiety/withdrawal. Increased self-expression, including non-verbally. Increased engagement.	Increased staff understanding of how to deliver the curriculum creatively. Increased understanding of supporting SEND pupils with specific strategies for example non verbal cues, stripping back the language, careful selection of key words.	Increased partnership working.	Giving time and space to establish, develop, monitor and evaluate partnerships. Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting. Time and capacity for shared planning – across schools and within departments/teams. School culture and ethos. Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches. Strength of doing this as part of a trust where it is high profile and supported within the trust.

The Elliot Foundation Collaborative

Shirestone Academy, Birmingham is a Mixed primary school for 238 pupils age 3-11, with 53.6% eligible for Free School Meals

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	Teachers	Whole school	
A school priority is for pupils to be trauma safe, and their holistic development is a priority. As a small school, they didn't have the resources to work with specialist partners, so through Creativity Collaboratives they worked with partners Sampad. Teachers explored how creativity could help bring different aspects of the curriculum to life. They had a particular focus on linking with place, and tapping into the cultural heritage of the areas in which the school is situated.	Increased enjoyment, engagement and participation. Increased awareness of other cultures. Pupils having access to role models that aren't teachers/family members.	Increased awareness of strategies that could be used with children. Increased empathy among teachers of what it is like to be a child in the school. Development of new skills that can be used across the curriculum.	Creativity isn't seen as an add-on, rather an integral part of their school culture and ethos.	Consistent and relevant CPD – access to experts. Senior leaders having confidence and belief in creative approaches. Time for teachers and partners to reflect and think about their findings. Having a shared vision with partners. Regional and national peer-to-peer networks for sharing, learning, reflecting and supporting. Having a 'creative lead' in the school. Whole staff involvement including SLT and governors, where all recognise and value creativity. School culture and ethos. Acknowledgement that this is a long process and doesn't happen overnight – incremental steps to change. Having the MAT to broker partnerships with cultural organisations.

The Penryn Partnership Collaborative

Mawnan Church of England VA Primary School has less than 150 pupils aged 4-11. 11.3% of pupils are eligible for Free School Meals.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
Their focus was on creativity within science, outdoor learning, and 'emergent risk taking'. Their work involved training from an external partner and specialist in outdoor learning, Alfresco Learning. Examples of activities inspired by Alfresco Learning included exploring the global post system using a 'loose parts' approach to building postal delivery ships outdoors.	The main outcomes for pupils observed by a Mawnan teacher were an increase in child-led learning, pupils developing a wider vocabulary, increased persistence, and being more willing to 'have a go'. Overall there has been an increase in engagement.	The teacher interviewed felt that they developed the skills and willingness to allow pupils more space and agency to lead their own learning. They also reported an increased sense of inspiration and enjoyment in their teaching. It gave them the opportunity to develop confidence and pride in their work through delivering CPD for other staff.	Teaching for Creativity became an increasing part of school culture and ethos over the course of Creativity Collaboratives, mostly through dialogue and sharing amongst staff.	Having the foundation of an already strong curriculum to build on. Freedom and openness to experiment. Collaborative meetings led by the creativity lead, with a focus on sharing ideas.

The Penryn Partnership Collaborative

Penryn College is a mixed secondary academy school and Sports College, with over 1000 pupils aged 11-16.

Teaching for creativity approach	Observed outcomes			Conditions for success
	Pupils	**Teachers**	**Whole school**	
A wide range of strategies were tested at Penryn College. The teacher interviewed focused particularly on dialogue and collaboration to increase pupils' use of vocabulary and language in Media and Drama. Giving pupils choice and independence was key.	For pupils who experienced Teaching for Creativity over multiple years, the teacher observed overall stronger learning outcomes and engagement (evidenced by, for example, pupils being more likely to meet deadlines). Pupils became more confident risk takers and more independent in their learning. Collaboration also improved.	The teacher interviewed reported becoming more thorough in their planning. They also felt more purposeful, autonomous and engaged in their teaching. They felt adopting Teaching for Creativity prevented them from experiencing burnout.	The main change was a culture of greater risk taking, supported by a teacher coaching system that afforded more opportunities for discussion and exploration.	Appropriate equipment and resources being available to students (e.g. software for Media lessons). Coaching programme for teachers. Clear building blocks and learning pathways, shared with pupils and parents/carers.