

Central Leeds Learning Federation is made up of Primrose and the City of Leeds high schools with Shakespeare primary school. All schools have a high multi ethnic intake and increasing numbers of pupils with English as a second language.

What did the school want to achieve?

The school aimed to build on primary developments to provide a relevant educational experience linking children across phases, improving transition, motivation and attendance and enabling the high schools to develop a well structured, highly personalised and engaging curriculum that would respond to the needs and concerns of students.

The arts departments sought to enrich students' experiences by developing partnerships with: Leeds City Art Gallery, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, an artist and poet in residence, funding came from Leeds Art Forms, supported by the DCSF Partnership Programme and the Arts Council.

The school wished to develop links to other art forms and curriculum areas, music, media and English and challenge the traditional timetable pattern in the high schools.

How was learning organised to achieve these aims?

The project ran from October to March 2008. Learning was re-organised to facilitate cross phase and cross curricular links. This reflected the high schools' commitment to personalised learning, empowering students and creating opportunities for all to experience success.

The re-organisation allowed ½ day workshops to be delivered by an artist in each school and another half day in Leeds City Art Gallery. These were followed by a full day workshop at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Out of school experiences proved highly significant. Students worked with a variety of other adults to explore issues surrounding the environment and recycling. They experimented freely with materials and processes, vertical grouping allowed KS3 and 4 students to take responsibility for younger pupils and staff from both phases to learn from one another.

Later in-school workshops included a poet to foster cross curricular links. Students worked collaboratively in vertical groupings across phases improving their ability to relate and listen to other children and adults.

The four schools met monthly to discuss ideas and progress. These meetings greatly enhanced understanding across the phases and enabled secondary colleagues to observe collaborative and creative practice linking curriculum areas in a primary setting.

How well did the school achieve its aims?

Teachers developed new creative and collaborative approaches to the curriculum and teaching following the artist led workshops. They are now using methods and approaches from the workshops in class and these, together with discussions of recycling and other issues relevant to students, have now been embedded into the art curriculum and will form the basis for new curriculum planning.

The engagement, confidence and motivation of students improved throughout the project which was evidenced by their contributions, both oral and practical, in workshops and classrooms and the 100% attendance figures for the period of the project. They learned how to take risks and learn from mistakes – a key feature of the new POS for art and design in the Secondary Curriculum. Taking responsibility for the development of their own ideas and expressing their views and ideas without confrontation they became more reflective and able to support, relate and listen to others. Overall their ability and confidence in thinking for themselves increased remarkably with improved motivation, self esteem and confidence

The new curriculum approach that was implemented provided excitement in creating, learning and communicating, and is encouraging a lifelong love of the arts in students and developed their passion for education and art.

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