

What did the school want to achieve?

The Green School hosted its second Creative Olympics, originally a project inspired by our collaboration with Mark Trezona and Creative Partnerships in conjunction with Arts Council England. It has now become a permanent feature of the school calendar and has transformed the nature of the school's traditional activity days.

The aim was to deliver twelve creative challenges expressing multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary skills, with students working collaboratively in groups and across key stages and subjects. Our goal was to embed creativity in the school curriculum and embrace the cross-curricular dimensions of the New Secondary Curriculum. We wanted staff and students to recognise that creativity isn't necessarily about the traditional art forms but could be expressed in a multitude of ways throughout the whole curriculum with collaborative projects.

The Creative Olympics has multiple pedagogical opportunities; another aim was to provide student leaders with a voice in planning the event, to collaborate with subject leaders on the challenges and support in delivering them. On the day of the Creative Olympics the school timetable collapses and all year groups along with teaching and non-teaching staff participate in challenges.

How was the learning organised to achieve these aims?

Working with Creative Partnerships our student leaders attended a training day to decide on our school's definition of creativity.

- Questioning & Challenge
- Imagination & Originality
- Exploring Ideas and Keeping Options open
- Communication & Working together
- Reflecting & Evaluating ideas, actions & outcomes

These five descriptors are displayed in classrooms and can be used in a multitude of ways in lessons, setting learning objectives or as the basis of assessment for learning activities. On the day of the Creative Olympics, subject and student leaders award tokens in the colours of the descriptors when they observe students

demonstrating creativity during the challenges.

Before the event, form classes split into groups with team names and select their favourite challenges. The teams were grouped vertically due to the cross-phase learning aspect with KS 3, 4 & 5 working together in challenges. This enabled students to feel comfortable in friendship groups and to learn from peers. It also helped me to allocate teams to chosen learning experiences, remaining true to our original plan of empowering students in making decisions about learning.

Departments paired together to encourage staff to develop their creative thinking and ideas for cross-curricular challenges. On the morning of the Creative Olympics, student teams attended two challenge sessions.

- Art & Geography built weatherproof eco houses using natural or made materials;
- French & English created comedy sketches entitled 'Laughing in a foreign language';
- Food Technology led a German style ready steady cook competition;
- History & RE designed historical comic strips using ICT;
- Media & Physics ran an apprentice style egg parachute competition;
- Textiles & Biology embroidered cell structures on to garments;
- Spanish & English Literature painted versions of Spanish masters adding quotes in Spanish;
- Resistant Materials students created a musical instrument to play in a band,
- Drama directed a giant dance visualising ICT concepts through movement;
- Psychology & Sociology created giant brains identifying different areas of human behaviour;
- Maths & Business Studies made board games, competing against the clock in brain teasing puzzles;
- PE & Chemistry students built a tent city and participated in problem solving tasks heating up water without a fuel source!

Assessment of the event took place in the afternoon with students completing evaluations and presenting their learning experiences to their class. At the end of the day the high point was the Creative Olympic award ceremony with a live 'weigh in' of the creative tokens collected by each school house. Trophies and house points were awarded for the individual creative colours.

How successful was the project?

The Creative Schools programme was implemented as part of a strategy to enable teachers to develop a more creative approach to teaching, enabling staff and students to realise their own creative potential. The Creative Olympics and the definitions have supported staff in recognising when creative teaching and learning is taking place in lessons. Teachers understand that being creative is not just about working within art and design, but can be applied to all subjects. The cross-curricular nature of the Creative Olympics prepared staff for the New Secondary Curriculum and gave them confidence to think in new directions and find more open, exciting and alternative ways of presenting teaching and learning.

Most importantly, the Creative Olympics brought the whole school together, making it possible for teachers and students to see creativity demonstrated in the school environment. Funding was minimal as the true nature of the challenge was to be resourceful, to develop a deeper understanding of sustainability by recycling materials and reflect on Whole Curriculum Dimensions.

In conjunction with the Creative Olympics, the school has a peer observation programme for staff to observe good practice in lessons using the creative definitions. The creativity strategy has also had a positive impact on implementing and delivering the integrated curriculum, with its cross-curricular links.

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