

**School profile:** the Charter School is a non-selective, co-educational Community School located in Southwark in South East London. Over half of the students are from minority ethnic backgrounds. It has Business and Enterprise Specialist Status.

### What was the school trying to achieve

Since it opened in 2000 The Charter School has used a modular system of planning and assessment. The art and design department's planning was described in a recent inspection as 'detailed' and 'very carefully structured'. However, it was felt that the focus on prescriptive outcomes may be less interesting for boys than girls – a view supported by the fact that fewer boys than girls are now taking Art and Design at KS4. A review process led the staff team to consider the introduction of more collaborative, open-ended and locally determined outcomes that might appeal to boys.

### How was learning organised to achieve these aims?

The 'Importance statement' of Art and Design in the new Secondary Curriculum fundamentally drove the project's conception and planning. 'They learn to think and act as artists, craftspeople and designers' (Programme of Study for KS3, Art and Design Secondary Curriculum QCA). From start to finish the pupils gained an understanding of the role of the practitioner, taking on different jobs in teams and working collaboratively towards a range of shared goals; defining identity, researching others' work, presenting their ideas and constructing team artworks (Fig. 1). They shared in the knowledge that should their work be successful they would be given the opportunity to design and prepare for an exhibition in the school hall. They were set weekly challenges, and to date have risen to each.

The project is the result of collaboration between subjects. Citizenship and Art and Design led the long term planning, while the question of local and national identity was answered in an art lesson directed by Citizenship. When pupils planned their presentations a message from drama set out clear objectives (Fig. 2). The Art and Design Technician attended the lessons for one hour each week, helping groups to demonstrate a range of construction methods which are safe and achievable, and enabling teams of pupils to set realistic goals and achieve tangible outcomes.

The project used local resources and artists wherever possible. From recycled materials to projects made in the community, the locality was a key to project development. Pupils began researching works including 'A Humument' by local artist Tom Phillips – a book work made by repurposing another, completely different book – and Simon Patterson's vision of realigned identities within the London Underground map, The Great Bear (Fig. 3).

### How well did the school achieve its aims?

'Define and Re-Use' is halfway through its first run at the time of writing, and therefore to date it is without completed outcome or measurable proof of final success. However there have been some indications that the project is working well: pupils now run to the lessons, and for two consecutive weeks all thirty students handed in their homework on time. It was organised for one boy, a wheelchair user who had originally seemed pleased to be withdrawn from lessons whilst the lift was not in operation, to be carried to art and design by his friends and teaching assistant so that he can participate – at his own request.

Whether the new curriculum planning been a success in terms of engagement is not easily quantifiable, but both boys and girls now give every sign that they 'enjoy learning'. They readily bring to each lesson resources and ideas and have modelled for each other the use of safe construction methods. Instead of thirty mini outcomes there will be eight essentially varied, but certainly collective contributions.

**The whole project when it is completed will be published on the NSEAD website where all of these projects are featured.**



Fig. 1



Fig. 2

Fig. 3

By kind permission of the artist, Simon Patterson

