



Report: Creative Health in Schools, Kirklees Creative Health Partnership

Background & introduction

The Kirklees Creative Health Hub (KCHP) is a network of educators, creative practitioners, community leaders and mental health specialists, aiming to increase and improve social prescribing services for all young people across Kirklees. The KCHP is led by Evoke as Kirklees' Local Cultural Education Partnership, funded by We are IVE and Arts Council England. The Partnership emphasises the value of creativity as a form of social prescribing, based on growing research demonstrating that arts and cultural activities can aid the mental health and personal development of children and young people as they navigate challenges in their lives.

Elaine Burke was appointed as Lead Arts, Health and Wellbeing Consultant to the KCHP in July / August 2021, with a remit to lead on the design and delivery of two Creative Health in Schools pilot studies within two schools across Kirklees. She was tasked with designing a Creative Health in Schools package to be tested out during the pilot studies in schools. The original ambition was for these pilot studies to be expanded and rolled out across the whole of Kirklees.

Initial thoughts about including tool kits and similar resources were ruled out as, in consultation with schools and in discussions within the steering group, it was fed back that such toolkits and resources were likely to be unused by schools, and that a co-production and experiential approach to the pilots at that point would be of much more value, and provide more impactful learning at that stage. Also, within these initial discussions with schools, the issue of transitions from primary to secondary school was highlighted as a significant area of concern, and one which would be transferable to a wide range of schools, post-pilot phase. This, therefore, was the issue we chose to focus on in the pilot programme.

Early consultations with schools – wellbeing concerns and barriers to using creativity to support wellbeing

An initial consultation discussion with several schools connected to the KCHP highlighted the context, issues and challenges for schools in working with children and young people, and supporting their wellbeing, and in using creativity and creative approaches to do this. In September 2021, these key issues were identified as follows:

Schools' concerns about wellbeing, and barriers to using creativity to support CYP

Return to school 'post-Covid' presenting mixed experiences – good to be back together again, but staff and CYP overwhelmed at times by coming out of bubbles and being in large groups. This is provoking general anxiety and difficulties for some children in making decisions.

Many mental health initiatives in schools offer lots of information about emotional literacy etc, but little for staff on how to implement recommended actions.
Staff understand that difficult behaviours have underlying causes, but don't know what practical actions to take.
Staff are receptive to supporting mental health in schools, but often challenged by dealing with classes with mixed needs – they sometimes need 'quick responses' at their fingertips, to support individual children or to offer the whole class a brief helpful activity.
Staff would like to undertake preventative actions, rather than feeling reactive and responsive to existing mental health difficulties.
Creativity is usually a good way in to reach parents, who are often disengaged from school.
Sometimes schools are approached with too many creativity and mental health offers – it can be overwhelming and difficult to know what works.
Staff often feel they need extra (expert) support for CYP with mental health issues, and may not realise that there are other options available to them.
Staff can feel 'done to' rather than 'collaborated with' and need to see the benefits to them of new mental health initiatives – otherwise these are seen as burdensome 'paperwork' and not used.
School staff need support for their own mental health, and to feel valued.

Engagement principles – how creativity can support wellbeing in schools

As a result of the above feedback, in October 2021 Elaine Burke created the following framework of engagement principles, which briefly and simply 'framed' creative approaches to supporting mental wellbeing, and support school staff to see why and how these could best be used for a range of purposes to fit their needs (1).

These principles provided a spectrum of approaches to using creativity to support wellbeing. They are flexible and responsive to the specific needs of individual schools, their pupils, parents and staff. This range of options provides different 'ways in' for schools to safely use creativity to support wellbeing.

Engagement principle	Details
1. Creativity is good for everyone	Creativity supports the mental wellbeing of everyone - school staff and parents – not just CYP. Our offer is for everyone (2).
2. Structured creative activities	Creative activities that have an underlying purpose to support mental wellbeing (e.g. Arts Drop – online or pre-printed activity cards underpinned by a 7-principle mental health framework). Staff would gain an understanding of the principles of why creativity is beneficial to mental health, and have easy, fingertip-ready activities to draw on at short notice – for individuals, small groups or whole classes.
3. Unstructured creative activities	A kind of 'mini-studio' approach where pupils are encouraged to freely create in a range of artforms – with no prescribed outcome required. Staff

	would be supported to draw out creativity by helping CYP get started, asking questions, reflecting back observations, offering encouragement etc.
4. 'Infused' creativity	Offering daily or weekly 'creative challenges' which are fun and quirky, and offer pupils scope to develop creative thinking. They can also be used to 'break state' when classes are lethargic or too high energy etc. Creative challenges can be done by individuals, in groups etc and can be sent home to be completed as a family.
5. Creativity as animateur	Creative approaches to animating the curriculum. Supporting schools to think with artists about how particular curriculum areas could be injected with creative elements to make it more engaging, accessible and multi-dimensional for pupils.
6. A blended approach	Schools may find it useful to use any of these principles on their own, or in combination with others.

With training and support in each of these basic principles, schools should be able to make these their own, and find their most ideal ways to incorporate them into school structures, curricula, timetables etc.

Elaine Burke's aim in developing this framework of engagement principles was to de-mystify creativity, making it fun and easy to engage with, so that schools harness the unique power it offers to support children and young people's wellbeing.

An exciting offshoot – CAMHS and Creative Spaces (a brief overview)

When shared with KCHP members, the response to the above framework was very positive. As a result, the Lead for CAMHS was particularly interested in Principle 3 – Unstructured Activities, which, with appropriate support, she felt would offer a suitable model for engaging and supporting young people referred to CAMHS, who were experiencing mental health issues, but currently on the waiting list.

CAMHS had wished to engage creatively with young people for some time and were looking for a suitable model and partner. As a result of the above framework, CAMHS partnered with **hoot creative arts** and, together with Elaine Burke, developed the Creative Spaces programme.

Creative Spaces was developed to provide regular drop-in sessions available to young people aged 11-18 in Kirklees who were known to Thriving Kirklees mental health services (in service or awaiting service with Children's Emotional Wellbeing Service (ChEWS) or CAMHS). Creative Spaces provided an alternative supportive space for young people to seek peer support and self-help strategies to prevent escalation of need.

A successful application for NHS funds to relieve winter pressures on A&E services (where young people were presenting with mental health issues) allowed Creative Spaces to begin with one weekly group session in Spring 2022, this later expanded to two weekly sessions in different areas

(hoot HQ, Huddersfield and Batley). This programme ran independently of the rest of the Creative Health in Schools pilot projects.

Elaine Burke was engaged to provide initial specialist artist training (creative health work with adolescents) and, throughout the programme she provided regular supervision / reflective practice sessions for all artists working on the programme.

Creative Spaces provided:
A 'studio-style' drop-in space for children and young people in Kirklees who had been assessed by the CAMHS team and required low-level support with mental health issues like anxiety.
A non-therapy approach to art-making – creativity for wellbeing approach that encouraged young people to be creative in their own way, at their own pace, supported by highly-skilled multi-artform artists.
A creative space for young people to experiment with different artforms, try new things, meet new people; drop in and out on their own terms.
A safe approach – a member of the CAMHS team was always present for additional mental health support and oversight as required. Art Psychotherapist and Arts and Health Consultant, Elaine Burke, provided regular supervision / reflective practice sessions to all members of the team.

Creative Spaces aimed to reduce the number of young people attending A&E for perceived mental health concerns, and free capacity within the mental health crisis team to respond to those in crisis. It provided a safe space to explore creative and self-care strategies to prevent needs escalating, and gave young people opportunities to gain peer support from others also struggling with their mental health.

Carefully considered creative activities supported vulnerable young people to feel welcomed, included, heard and seen in a creative environment, away from school, family, peers and other potential pressures. These activities promoted confidence through creativity, learning new skills, achieving success through making and self-expression; and support young people's relationship skills through connections with other group members **(3 & 4)**.

Evaluation of the programme highlighted the following key impacts:

- Young people were highly engaged by the creative offer.
- Being creative catalysed connections and supported existing relationships.
- Resilience, confidence and learning new skills.
- Expression of identity.
- Calming anxieties.

Initial funding for the programme came to an end in early 2023 and, since then, efforts are ongoing (led by CAMHS and **hoot creative arts**) to refund this very successful and highly valued programme.

Back to the Schools Pilots – developing the Transitions Programme

The BBest Schools hub, which represented several primary and secondary schools in the Kirklees area was identified by the Steering Group as the best placed network with whom to work on the pilot projects. Elaine Burke led a consultation session with several senior school representatives (see Appendix 1 for list of questions explored) and the following consistent themes around children and family's concerns about school transitions were identified:

Challenges	Who	Details and examples relating to new schools
Practical worries	Children	Where and how to catch buses to secondary school. How to use school café and have enough food. Will they be allowed to use the toilets if needed.
	Parents	What support available for SEND and EAL children? How to deal with PE kits etc. New admin processes and rules.
Emotional worries	Children	How will I make new friends? Will I lose my current friends? Will I get in trouble? How does discipline work in my new school? What if I make mistakes?
	Parents	Who do I talk to if worried about my child? Increasing anxiety levels escalating over the summer – worries being transferred to children.
Needs identified	Children	Need to develop inner personal resources and skills to cope with change (e.g. resilience, strengthened sense of personal identity, relationship skills)
	Parents	Need to develop skills and confidence to understand their children's worries, and know how to support them.

As a result of this feedback, Elaine Burke developed a set of guiding principles to help shape the pilot programme offer, which was subsequently agreed by the steering group:

Guiding Principles	Rationale
The importance of a 'good start' to secondary school	Schools reported that a good start framed and shaped pupils' subsequent experiences – creative health pilot sessions therefore needed to support CYP to have a positive experience of themselves, peers and their future school change.
Attend to both PRACTICAL and EMOTIONAL worries	Pilot projects would provide a range of ways in to help schools, children and parents address these. Existing programmes often focussed on the practical issues only.
Activities BEFORE transition (Summer term)	Existing programmes in school often happened just before summer term end. Ideally these should begin after Easter, and continue throughout the summer term to allowing enough time for children to process their concerns or the information / support offered.
Activities AFTER transition (Autumn term)	Existing programmes in school rarely happened after transition to secondary school – increasing the risk of a 'bad start' (see first point). We aimed to test the effectiveness of supporting CYP as they entered their new school.

Link with Summer School? / 'At home' activities for families?	Potentially a way to support high risk families, and reduce the escalation of worries over summer. This was proposed but not actioned as it was too complex within the pilot's capabilities.
Strengthen the child – resource from the inside out	Creative health pilot sessions needed to help children develop inner resources like self confidence / identity / friendship skills etc that they can take wherever they go. This is based on mental health promotion principles and evidence of the importance of 'strengthening the individual' (5).
Range of offers – to fit with Evoke / EB Framework	All of these principles directly map onto the framework of engagement principles, so that we provided schools with a flexible menu of options to best fit their needs.

The Transitions Programme – Creative Health offer to schools

Elaine Burke, Lead Arts, Health and Wellbeing Consultant developed the following creative health programme, which offered a multi-dimensional model of engagement in creative activities to support CYP wellbeing as they moved from primary to secondary school.

This mapped directly onto the matrix of concerns identified by schools, and the guiding principles above, as well as the underlying framework of engagement principles – to ensure consistency and high quality throughout the process.

This proposed approach was developed into both a PDF document and a presentation, and discussed with BBest Hub schools in a consultation session. **See Appendix 2 for key pages from these resources emailed to the schools, and the key slide from the presentation.** This includes an explanation from Elaine Burke about why and how creativity supports CYP's wellbeing (6) – with particular relevance to school settings. **See also attached PDF for full document.** This proposed programme was very well received, and agreed to go ahead as outlined below:

Issue / concern	Target	Led by:	Details
Practical worries	Children	School staff	A series of 'Myth-Busting' sessions, starting from Easter and develop to give children time to process worries / questions / answers about their new school. It uses the creative device of a simple, anonymised post-box, creatively designed and decorated by the whole class. See Appendix 3 for Postbox guidance resource for teachers
	Parents	School staff with support from arts organisations	An initial proposal to offer an 'At Home' summer programme of creative activities, to catalyse fun and enhance contact between parents and children. However, this was beyond the scope of what could be offered within available resources and timescales.
Emotional worries – includes strengthening	Children	Artists & arts organisations, in schools	Artist-led sessions at school, using various artforms and creative approaches to help children with themes like friends / change / all about me etc. Different artists interpreted and delivered this using their own specific artforms and skills etc.

inner resources & supporting parents	Parents & children	Creative Education Consultants in schools	Sessions led by both Creative Education Consultants. An initial talking session with parents only, to discuss general concerns about transitions, and to highlight the importance of positive connections with their children. Followed by a joint creative session with parents and children, to model creative communication in practice.
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The following is a list of dates, participating schools and lead artists – note that session durations and formats varied, to test options and make comparisons at the pilot stage:

School	Pupil creative workshop	Family session	Lead artists
Field Lane Primary	Fri July 1 st – morning (approx. 30 pupils) 2-hour sessions	Fri July 1 st – afternoon (approx. 30 pupils & parents)	Visual arts - Musarat Raza
Batley Girls	Tues July 5 th – all day (approx. 230 pupils) 1-hour sessions		Visual arts - Harriet Lawson, Julia Roebuck, Musarat Raza
Warwick Road	Thurs July 7 th – morning (approx. 50 pupils) 2-hour sessions	Thurs July 14 th – afternoon (approx. 50 pupils & parents)	Visual arts - Musarat Raza and Sally Barker
Upper Batley High	Fri 23rd September – all day (approx. 160 pupils)		Music / singing - James Mabett, Rob Crisp, Jess Baker

Developing the pilot concepts with artists - including CPD sessions:

Elaine Burke held two consultation / CPD sessions each with artists going into the same schools. See Appendix 4 for outline of artist CPD sessions. To ensure the emotional safety of sessions, whilst supporting children with their mental wellbeing, emphasis was placed on the importance of understanding feelings, rather than exploring them. *Understanding* helps children name, identify and validate their emotions (e.g. frustration, worry, anger etc), whereas *exploring* is not appropriate, as is more akin to therapy, and leads into areas that artists are not qualified to deal with. These clear boundaries, along with other important core concepts, were covered in both artist CPD sessions:

CPD session	Areas covered	Outcomes
Session 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> background to the pilots key concepts and approaches to creativity and wellbeing with children, including use of materials / resourcing from within etc emphasis on understanding, not exploring feelings discussion of possible session ideas 	Artists to develop their thinking and approach to sessions in their school – for further discussion next time
Session 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> artists presented their session ideas in-depth discussion and coaching to develop artists' session ideas practical discussions about timings / materials / school contacts / artist support details / logistics 	Session content, format and logistics signed off and agreed

See below for details of the sessions delivered by artists in the schools. This does not include workshops for parents / parents and children, which were delivered by Creative Education Consultants Kathy Coates Mohammed and Stephanie Bartholet (see their report for information).

School	Artists	Session details
Field Lane Primary	Musarat Raza	'Star qualities' tote bags: make and decorate a tote bag – give and receive positive feedback. Help children reflect on their own positive qualities, and those of their friends, and people they would want to make friends with.
Batley Girls	Harriet Lawson, Julia Roebuck, Musarat Raza	'Leaving your mark': What advice would I give to myself or my friend to help me on my first day at Batley Girls school in September? Guidance prompts: What might make things easier for me? What has helped me in other situations like this? Example: it's OK not to know where everything is. Everyone else is feeling just like me! HL: Pupils created cardboard and laminated butterflies. A colourful symbol of positive change, on which to write their advice if wished. Ambition: to be wearable (as finger puppets or tied to their wrists) OR make a wall display in a corridor - a butterfly art trail. JR: Hand stitched messages onto a small cotton fabric square with colourful embroidery thread and small embroidery hoops. To be left at the school and distributed out on the first week of year 7 to every year 7 student. MR: Using Posca pens to write messages onto pebbles – to take home / gift to friends / both
Warwick Road	Musarat Raza and Sally Barker	'Star qualities' tote bags (MR): see Field Lane details above Remembering what's important (SB): Creating a sketchbook to observing and capture memories from the school environment – drawing other important people and things from home / friends etc. Friends writing messages of encouragement and support to each other – a sketchbook to treasure and add to.
Upper Batley High	James Mabett, Rob Crisp, Jess Baker	Each musician working with 3 groups throughout the day. Developing group songwriting / group rhythm / body percussion – simple, organic approach with no instruments – focussing on self-generated sounds – to empower young people and strengthen sense of togetherness. Separate groups throughout the day, then coming together to share their creations and sing together at the end of the day in a final celebration performance with each other.

Session delivery and effectiveness - feedback from artists

Field Lane Primary School – one artist (MR):

Activity	Feedback	Key learning
Warm up activity	Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pupils very engaged and enthused by session <i>'best art session ever!'</i> 	Active staff involvement is essential.

<p>Reflect on own and friends' personal qualities.</p> <p>Main activity: Pupils created 'star quality' template, from which each decorated tote bag to reflect positive qualities about themselves.</p> <p>Time for reflection: Discussion about what session was like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No behavioural issues. • Teacher highly engaged and involved – modelling participation for pupils. Worked closely with artist. • Teacher very inspired and now planning to do similar session with other classes. Also indicated strong CPDL potential for other colleagues. • Warm up activity worked very well and addressed bonding issues for class. • Session structure very effective – 3 sections very clear and containing for pupils. • High quality materials used were highly valued by teacher and pupils – felt that it placed value on them and the process. 	<p>Three-part structure of sessions is good practice: warm up, main activity and reflection.</p> <p>Working with experienced artists is important – planned well and delivered effectively.</p>
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Warwick Road Primary School – one artist (MR):

Activity	Feedback	Key learning
<p>Warm up activity Reflect on own personal qualities and friends personal qualities.</p> <p>Main activity: Pupils created 'star quality' template, from which each decorated tote bag to reflect positive qualities about themselves.</p> <p>Time for reflection: Discussion about what session was like</p>	<p>Feedback</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significantly reduced staff engagement compared with Field Lane above. • This was directly linked to significant behavioural issues with pupils. • Teacher stayed in the room, but did their own work and expected artist to manage pupil behaviour. • However, despite this many pupils were very engaged and very proud of their creations. • Pupils very proud of their bags and were delighted to take them home. 	<p>Reduced staff involvement directly links to increased behavioural issues.</p> <p>Greater clarity required when agreeing sessions with schools about expectations of who manages pupil behaviour.</p> <p>Well-structured creative sessions are highly engaging to pupils, even in challenging environments.</p> <p>Importance of 'gifts' and creations to take home – generates pride, and can catalyse conversations at home.</p>

Batley Girls School – three artists (MR, JR, HL)

Activity	Feedback	Key learning
<p>Artist: MR</p> <p>Warm up activity Reflect on own personal qualities and friends personal qualities.</p> <p>Main activity:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very difficult morning session - no teacher support, just pastoral support (staff member who hadn't been briefed and did not know the groups). • 113 students in one large sports hall – divided into the three groups – very noisy and chaotic. 	<p>Need different rooms for different activities. Large groups and open spaces are too distracting and not contained enough.</p> <p>When working with multiple groups, each group needs</p>

<p>Using Posca pens to write messages onto pebbles – to take home / gift to friends / both.</p> <p>Time for reflection: Discussion about what session was like</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Three Year 7 girls accompanied students for ‘support’. Totally inappropriate: distracted younger girls, were talking and issues with behaviour management. • All artists left to manage behaviours without staff support. • Afternoon session was better after artist MR spoke to Deputy Head and Year 7 Lead, who sorted children into groups. • However, still some issues with behaviour management, and MR had to ask Pastoral Lead to manage issues. • Creative activities went well within difficult circumstances – pupils engaged and enjoyed creative work. Key to success was simple and well-structured activity. 	<p>own lead member of staff, who is well-briefed and engaged.</p>
<p>Artist: JR Hand stitched messages onto a small cotton fabric square with colourful embroidery thread and small embroidery hoops.</p> <p>To be left at the school and distributed out on the first week of year 7 to every year 7 student.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics and management issues as above. • Pupils’ sewing ability was much lower than artist expected. A lot of time taken up with helping to thread needles and tie knots. Used pre-threaded needles in afternoon session. • Artist would have preferred a 2-hour session, rather than simplify activity. • Artist left concerned that creations would be distributed as planned. 	<p>Existing discussions in CPD sessions, and agreements on realistic expectations of what can be achieved need to be extended, to ensure clarity for artists about session content.</p> <p>More clarity required from school staff about pupils’ skills / abilities / capacities etc to ensure that creative content is pitched correctly.</p>
<p>Artist: HL Pupils created cardboard and laminated butterflies. A colourful symbol of positive change, on which to write their advice if wished.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Logistics and management issues as above. • Artist arrived late and felt overwhelmed. • Group placed in the middle of the sports hall, so very noisy and hard to focus. • Workshop relied on laminators – tech didn’t work. • Artist had assumed that successful plan in other settings would transfer – but session too complicated for this set up. • Artist realised that this kind of work does not suit them. • Morning session with pupils was moderately successful – some pupils felt they were not creative. • Afternoon session was much more successful – artist had regrouped, simplified their plan, and also mitigated tech issues. This allowed space for pupils to connect with each other – good feedback from pupils about how much they had enjoyed the session. 	<p>Preparation is key - artists needs to arrive well ahead of time to set up. Tech should be checked beforehand etc.</p> <p>Activity plans need to be very well thought-through and not rely on complicated construction</p> <p>Pupils need to be briefed by school about creative health sessions, so they are ready for a different experience beyond usual art classes.</p>

Recommendations

The purpose of the Creative Health pilot projects was to test ideas, models and approaches in different school settings, to see what worked and what did not. The recommendations below set out what needs to be in place for this model to be successfully repeated, scaled up and / or transferred to other schools – a key ambition of the pilot phase. These recommendations are categorised by theme.

1. Transitions focus and framework:

- The focus on transitions emerged from consultation with schools in the KCHP and the BBest Hub, and proved to be an important and powerful area of focus. It is clear that there is significant concern, anxiety and uncertainty around this issue, and that this is a genuinely universal area of relevance to most, if not all, primary schools (and many secondaries). **It is recommended that this pilot programme focusing on transitions is indeed of interest and transferable to other schools, beyond those who participated in this initial pilot phase.**
- This multi-dimensional pilot model and framework, with its creative health offer for teacher-led / artist-led / children-focussed / parent- focussed sessions to address both practical and emotional worries is systemic and draws on good mental health promotion practice, and key ways to use creativity to support mental health and wellbeing. **It has proven a robust and strong working model in practice, and it is recommended that this core model and framework should continue to be delivered and refined.**

2. Working well with schools - strategically:

- To support children to prepare for transition to secondary school, **it is recommended that direct delivery work starts at schools from Easter onwards.**
- This means that **planning with schools, and all the development work with artists etc should start ideally in the summer term of the previous year** – to embed it into schools' timetabling and strategic planning cycles.
- Ideally more sessions at school would be even more beneficial – allowing further creative sessions to build on the success of previous work. **It is recommended that a costed model be developed which offers schools options for both one-off and multi-session input.**
- To ensure high level leadership and the best outcomes for children, **the transitions programme needs to be owned and led by headteacher and other members of schools' senior leadership teams.**
- **The programme needs to make clear contracts and agreements with schools** that are collegiate, mutually discussed and set out expectations of all parties involved, including what schools will provide, and what the creative health offer is. See section below for specific operational issues to be included.

3. Working well with schools - operationally:

This sets out key issues that should be included in contracting arrangements with schools.

- **It is recommended that school staff be well-briefed in advance of session delivery.** Time constraints during the pilot phase did not allow this to be addressed adequately. This should

ideally involve a more co-produced approach, so that schools can advise on pupil's skills and capabilities. Differently costed approaches to briefings can offer choices to schools. Ranging from the low-cost option of the transitions programme providing a detailed activity plan in advance of sessions, to the higher cost option of offering a taster session with staff, which would add significant CPDL benefits, as well as helping to clarify expectations, and encouraging active engagement from school staff.

- The pilot programme demonstrates that **active teacher / staff involvement in school sessions is essential**. Direct comparison with same artist and same session content demonstrates that staff involvement and participation is key to both levels of pupil participation and pupil behaviour management. Where school staff did not engage or participate in sessions, a marked increase in pupil disruption, and a decrease in pupil participation was observed.
- **Staff participation is of immense value:**
 - Models and validates pupil participation.
 - Offers CPD opportunities for staff, who can acquire transferable skills.
 - Supports pupil behaviour management.
- **It is recommended that school staff, not artists, lead on behaviour management**, and that this is agreed and briefed on clearly in advance. Behaviour management is the responsibility of school staff, and where artists were left to manage pupil behaviour, it impacted significantly on the effectiveness of sessions in the pilot phase.
- **It is recommended that practical and logistical issues are clearly agreed with schools in advance**. These include schools providing suitable spaces for sessions, for example, a separate room per group is essential. The transitions programme should also let staff know about what materials they plan to use, and discuss whether schools can provide basic materials like paper, pens etc.

4. Working well with artists

The pilot phase highlighted key areas of practice that worked well, and others that can be improved on.

- **It is recommended that recruiting artists starts in autumn**, to allow enough training and development in time for delivery in schools from Easter onwards. During the pilot, time pressures resulted in late artist recruitment, so the process was somewhat rushed. This limited the range and scope of artists available to work on the project.
- **It is recommended that the transitions programme is delivered by artists with significant experience** of working in schools, and with creative health approaches. Working in these contexts is complex, and requires artists with a solid background and track record of delivering this kind of work in such environments. During the pilot phase, less experienced artists struggled somewhat to plan and manage sessions effectively.

However, it is also important to support less experienced artists to develop skills, so it is ideal to incorporate learning and development opportunities for artists new to this way of working, for example, shadowing and assisting more experienced artists. This will also help ensure the sustainability of this work, and help build artist capacity.

- **It is recommended that artist CPD is strengthened a little**. The two-part CPD format worked well, however, additional time for training (first part of CPD) would be helpful to ensure an

even more in-depth grounding in creative health approaches. Increasing the initial CPD session from 2 hours to half a day would be ideal.

Additionally, if delivering more than one session in schools or offering regular transitions programme sessions to schools, then facilitated reflective practice sessions for artists would be a best practice approach.

- **It is recommended that future transitions programmes consider working with a wider range of artforms.** The pilot tested work with visual artists and musicians, but other artforms like dance, writing, theatre etc will provide significant benefits too, and should be included in the scope of the transitions offer to schools.

5. Session content

The pilot project highlighted key learning about specific in-session approaches that worked well, which helps guide artists planning future creative health sessions in schools.

- **A three-part structure within creative health sessions is good practice** - warm up, main activity and reflection. This helps children 're-frame' their understanding of what the session is about; differentiate it from more familiar school art classes; bring focus to health and wellbeing; and promote pupil engagement, even in challenging environments.
- **The symbol of making and giving 'gifts'** was highlighted in artist CPD sessions, and this proved to be important. It is recommended that this is an important theme for artists to weave into their session delivery - creations to take home or give to others generates pride; helps mark transitions; helps make connections and acknowledge friendships; and can catalyse conversations at home with family members.
- The structure within **parent-focussed sessions where parents met together initially for conversation about transitions, and were joined later by their children** for joint creative activities was highly successful. It is recommended that this structure is continued and could be further developed with additional creative resources which families can take home and enjoy together. This would continue and extend the benefits of this approach. **Other creative offers could be developed for schools**, which use a similar two-part facilitated model to support parents and children with other issues beyond transitions.
- **It is recommended that artists understand and take account of children's skills**, dexterity and other physical capabilities. These are reported by schools to be increasingly variable, and post-Covid, many more children are now behind on previously expected developmental milestones. It is important that the transitions programme liaises effectively with schools on this. It is also essential, when designing activities, that artists aim to strike a balance between pushing creative ambitions and achievements to feel proud of, while helping children to succeed within their existing capabilities.
- **It is recommended that creative health sessions in schools are planned to include adequate space and time for children to chat and otherwise meaningfully connect** with each other. The power of creative health work is that well-planned and wellbeing-informed creative activities skilfully facilitate and support high quality social interaction. Social connectedness is evidenced to be essential and foundational for mental wellbeing, and the key protective factor against mental ill-health (7).

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18th December 2023



For information about intellectual property, please see Statement of Engagement / Contractor Agreement between Evoke and Lawrence Batley Theatre on behalf of the Kirklees Theatre Trust, and Elaine Burke.

Appendices: Creative Health in Schools: Evoke and Kirklees Creative Health Partnership

Appendix 1: Consultation questions with BBest Hub Schools – school transition concerns (Lead by Elaine Burke)

Question	Rationale
What are the specific issues and concerns around transitions? What are the challenges?	Understanding specific challenges, rather than generalities.
The most important impacts this is having?	How do you know? What do you see in the children?
What's causing the problem?	The why of it all.
Where do we want to get to?	Specific objectives.
What do you do currently do to support transition?	What works / doesn't work? Why?
What would make the biggest difference?	Moves us towards a solution / starting places for the pilot project.
What would success look like?	Specifics indicators.
Where should our focus be?	What will make the biggest difference?
Who should be part of this?	All options: children, parents, staff, past pupils – anyone else?
When / how etc?	Clarify any restrictions / timings / things to avoid etc.
Anything else that's important?	
Next steps.	

Appendix 2: Proposed pilot model and approach: a) PDF for BBest Hub Schools (Elaine Burke & Greg Bond)



INTRODUCTION

This is a proposal for schools from the **BBEST Hub** to collaborate with **Evoke** and the **Kirklees Creative Health Partnership (KCHP)** to co-design and co-develop creative approaches for supporting pupil's mental health and wellbeing

Nothing is set in stone at this stage. This is simply a pitch to begin conversations.



INTRODUCTION

Recent discussions within the BBEST Hub have highlighted two potential areas of exploration that could act as the focus of this series of interventions in schools.

PILOT ONE: YR 6 + 7 TRANSITION

- Collaborate with education reps from BBEST Hub to identify key issues/tensions surrounding school transition
- Set shared goals
- Develop framework for supporting pupil's transition using creative activities
- Test this framework with one or two groups of Yr 6 at end of academic year, and then with Yr 7 at beginning of subsequent academic year.

PILOT TWO: ALL BOYS SCHOOL

- Work closely with Upper Batley High School and wider BBEST Hub
- Explore culture around mental health in all boys schools
- Identify key strengths and challenges
- Set shared goals
- Develop creative framework for supporting positive mental health and producing healthy school environments



Why Creativity?

The benefits of creativity are multiple and well documented, and we aim to bring these into our work with the BBEST Hub.

Creativity works on different levels - on the 'inside' to support inner personal development, understand emotions and identity; and on the 'outside' - developing ideas and the ability to stick with and master skills.




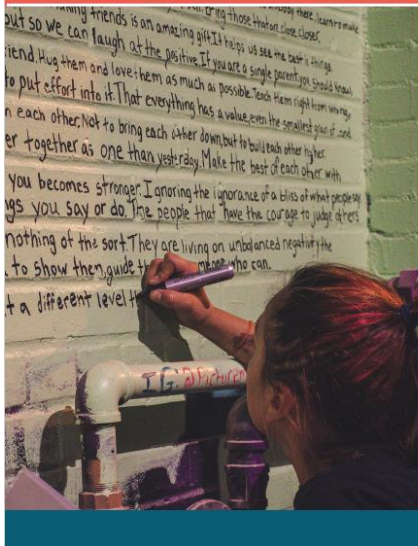
SUPPORTING LEARNING

The very process of creating is one of multiple successes and challenges - developing ideas and concepts; trying, failing, succeeding to realise desired outcomes; assessing and making choices; feeling proud and celebrating successes.


Creativity and problem solving are inherently linked - the 'everyday resourcefulness' required to try something new, take risks, stick with an idea, overcome challenges and further develop creative ideas in multiple directions is vital to developing the growth mindset that underpins and is transferable to learning across all curriculum areas.

CONFIDENCE & IDENTITY

Being creative is about personal expression and identity - helping children and young people understand their own personal preferences, choices and viewpoints - all the things that make them a unique and whole person, and that build their awareness and confidence in their identity - who they are and what they want to do in the world.

<p>KCHP ACTIVITY WORKING GROUP</p> <p>Cost of Pilots: Approx £10,000</p>  <p>Funded by Evoke</p>	<p>LEAD ART & HEALTH CONSULTANT Elaine Burke</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run Consultation Sessions with Teachers from BBEST Hub • Deliver CPD session with Teachers from BBEST Hub • Co-design Creative Health in School Pilots 	<p>EVOKE PROJECT COORDINATOR Greg Bond</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manage budget & Coordinate Evaluation • Engagement with BBEST Hub
	<p>CREATIVE EDUCATION CONSULTANTS Kathy Coates-Mohammed Stephanie Bartholet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run Consultation Sessions with Teachers from BBEST Hub • Deliver CPD session with Teachers from BBEST Hub • Co-design Creative Health in School Pilots 	<p>CREATIVE WORKSHOP FACILITATORS (OPTIONAL) Evoke partners, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HOOT Arts • Chol Theatre • The Children's Art School • West Yorkshire Print Workshop • Lawrence Batley Theatre • Manasamitra • And many more <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver 4 creative interventions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 x Primary School groups - 2 x Secondary School groups

b) Key slide from presentation to BBest Hub Schools (Elaine Burke)

<p>PRACTICAL - children</p> <p>Myth busting session(s)</p> <p>Post box for anonymous questions</p> <p>Answer 1 / 2 / 3 each day or week</p> <p>Develops over time</p> <p>Makes transition a live issue for longer</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL - children</p> <p>STRENGTHENING THE CHILD Resourcing from the inside out</p> <p>Friends: feedback from the whole class. Self-created postbox for each child. Activity over time.</p> <p>About change: creative exploration of change. Changes I've been through. Change – tips. Find the good in the change. Leave a creative legacy / something for new school.</p> <p>About me: 'Me Box / Bag' for resources. Friends' feedback. Change resources. Creative habits etc.</p> <p>Process: Direct sessions with artist</p>	<p>EMOTIONAL - Parents & children</p> <p>Creative activities to catalyse fun & contact</p> <p>'Getting it wrong' games</p> <p>'Creative change' – 'The good thing about it is....'</p> <p>Creative habits / challenge – for the whole family.</p>
<p>PRACTICAL - parents</p> <p>School leads on this</p> <p>We could offer 'At Home' summer programme activities at parents' info sessions.</p> <p>? Other connections with creative programme</p>		

Appendix 3: Myth-Busting Postbox process – guidance resource for school staff (Developed by Kathy Coates-Mohammed and Elaine Burke)

A Post Box of Transition Concerns and Questions

Introduction:

Transitions are by nature a time of change; change arouses in people a range of different emotions. Quite often, knowing change is about to happen causes anxiety. This will manifest itself in different ways; some people will voice their concerns readily, whilst in others it may be more obvious through their behaviour. Some people will quietly sit and worry.

Transitions are, to a large extent, full of 'unknowns'. Anticipation of events, that may seem out of your control, can provoke feelings of unease. For anyone experiencing change, there are a whole of host of questions—both practical and emotional. The more we can support children and young people with having the space and opportunity to ask these questions, the easier the transition will be.

Making the Box itself.....

The post box does not need to be elaborate. A cardboard box (attractively covered or painted) with a slit in the top will do. It is important though that it can be opened and then 're-sealed' a few times by the adult and not easily opened and closed by the children themselves.

The title on the box could be 'Do you have a Question? Or 'What do you need to Know?' combined with a short explanation of how it will work e.g.

- Anyone can post a question; however big or small.
- You don't have to write your name. No one will know who has asked which question.
- The box will be opened And the questions answered by.....
- If there are any questions that need further clarification, we will come back to them



Important Points

- Always open the box at the expected time
- Don't identify the poster
- Never make anyone feel that they have asked a trivial question or one that no-one else would do, e.g. " I have had a few questions about.... (even if you haven't).
- Always return to a question if you have had to go and clarify.

Appendix 4: outline of Artist CPD sessions (developed & led by Elaine Burke)

First session:

Topic	Details	Outcome(s)
Background to the pilot projects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key findings of consultations with schools about transitions. • Guiding principles and rationales shaping the pilot programme offer. • Outline of programme proposal agreed with schools. 	Artists fully briefed and on board with aims and processes of project to date.
Key concepts and approaches to creativity and wellbeing with children	<p>Basic core concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not therapy – not exploring emotions or opening up big discussions on feelings. <i>Understanding</i> not exploring feelings. • Help children to <i>understand</i> feelings by identifying / naming / validating / relating to etc. • Avoid messy / runny / sticky materials – to help emotionally ‘contain’ sessions. 	<p>Artists clear on boundaries and nature of session content to be developed.</p> <p>Artists confident to handle conversations with children in sessions.</p>
	<p>Strengthening the child – ‘resourcing from the inside out’:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using language to help identify / understand feelings. • Modelling examples of things going wrong and that’s OK – creative process. Modelling making changes / developing ideas / morphing / testing etc. • Focus on skills & ideas: Something to take home - a creative habit / practice to help when overwhelmed. etc OR a physical object to remind / encourage etc. • Reflecting back to children: positive feedback to help frame / reframe experiences and skills. 	
Pointers for possible session ideas / themes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential to create ‘gifts’ – for self / friends / others. Powerful as transitional objects to retain link with school / familiar supports etc. • Catalysing connections – activities that bring children together, highlighting friendship / support / fun etc. • Focus on me – self-reflection / feedback from others / both – positive, encouraging words to cherish. • Thinking about change – previous changes that I managed – what worked? 	Supporting artists to spark their creative ideas for sessions – that they can develop further for next CPD meeting.

Second session:

A more fluid, discursive and responsive approach:

- Artists present their session ideas.
- In-depth discussion, with individual and group coaching to develop artists’ session concepts.
- Practical discussions about timings / materials / school contacts / artist support details / logistics.

Outcomes:

- Session content, approaches and practical considerations all agreed and signed off.