



## Final Report

# Creative School Change Research Project



**Christine Hall, Ken Jones and Pat Thomson**

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**Abbreviations**

CA	Creative Agent
CP	Creative Partnerships
DHT	Deputy Headteacher
GTCE	General Teaching Council (England)
HT	Headteacher
NCSL	National College for School Leadership
SATs	Standard Assessment Tasks
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report gives an account of a research project that explored the ways in which schools have taken up the 'offer' made by Creative Partnerships, so as to bring about school change. Its findings are expressed partly in the form of descriptions and analyses of change, and partly in the form of heuristics - a way of identifying and labeling activities to facilitate discussion about features of school practice, and thus to assist the work of professional development.

The report sets school change in the context of international policies of school reform, arguing that such policies are always inflected at regional and at school level, so that an understanding of the process of 'vernacularisation' - the local language and practice of change - is essential.

Chapter 2, on 'Learning', presents an account of the ways in which schools' involvement in CP contributed to change in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment. It sets such changes in the context of other strong influences on the work of schools, notably that of the National Curriculum, and of pressures upon schools to label and differentiate their pupils.

Chapter 3, on 'Changing Pedagogies', draws out the lessons of the previous chapter. It offers an extensive heuristic section that seeks to classify various pedagogic approaches found in schools, and suggests that discussion of change in teaching and learning would benefit from a more explicit charting of the different approaches available to teachers.

Chapter 4 extends the focus of the report beyond the work of teachers. It sets school change in the context of relations with pupils, with parents and with the communities in which schools are located. Student participation was a strong feature of extensive school change. Relations with parents and communities were also significant, though teachers sometimes found it difficult to develop these strongly, and the ways in which teachers evaluated local communities sometimes underestimated their potential as partners in learning.

Chapter 5 explores the leadership and management of creative school change, concluding that CP was taken up in schools where the senior leadership team are moving beyond the 'command and control approach' that has often accompanied efforts at school change. The chapter looks also at the development of teacher capacity, and suggests that the re-orientation of teaching to which CP has contributed requires the development of new intellectual or theoretical approaches to classroom practice, as well as the learning of new pedagogical skills.

Chapter 6 considers regional, national and international dimensions of the CP project, and thus considers the work of schools in relation to the perspectives of those charged with carrying through the project as a whole: creative agents, regional and national directors. It tracks the effects on practice of the different 'readings' of CP policies and purpose offered by its staff, and concludes by comparing characteristic CP approaches with the experiences of similar projects of reform in other countries.

Chapter 7 concludes the report and sets out its findings in ways which we hope are 'useable' by those involved in programmes of school change, whether or not they go under the explicit heading of 'creativity'.

## INTRODUCTION

The research project had as its major objective to investigate how schools were taking up the offer made by Creative Partnerships in order to further school change. We took as our starting point that schools were not only already engaged in change and were required to do so by the broader government improvement agenda, but also that they were likely to be involved in more than one initiative. We did not seek therefore to capture a 'CP effect' or to judge the effectiveness of CP against a set of given criteria. Our interest was in how schools thought about change and what they did with the opportunities to work with creative practitioners over a period of time.

We are mindful of the problems associated in reporting on events that are now part of a previous incarnation of the Creative Partnerships (CP) programme. There is certainly a point in assembling evidence that assesses what the first phase of CP accomplished. However, our goal in this report has not only been to report our findings, but also to attempt to develop heuristics which may be useful as Creative Partnerships continues in its new form. Our intention is to develop a vocabulary and categories of activities which might be mobilised in professional development and diagnostic support of schools engaged in the next phase of the programme. This report thus represents only part of the final outcomes of the research. A further set of scholarly publications, dealing exclusively with the outcomes of the first phase of the programme, is also being developed.

This report focuses primarily on twelve case study schools but also cross-references a previous, interim report<sup>1</sup> which presented an analysis from the full cohort of schools that were investigated.

### The research

Our overall aim was translated into three research questions:

1. What kinds of school change are supported by CP? At what levels (whole-school, classroom etc) are these occurring, and what is the relationship between levels?

Sub questions:

- How are school cultures and structures changing with CP?
  - What teaching and learning practices are emerging in and through CP?
  - Which students and teachers are involved in CP activities and to what effect?
2. What models of partnerships are schools mobilising to produce change? What kinds of capacity-building are occurring through partnership? What tensions exist between partners and schools, and how are these being resolved?
  3. How does CP policy, as it is understood and enacted at national and regional levels, support school change?

The first phase of our research project involved taking snapshots of 40 schools across the country (see Figure 1). A full description of the snapshot schools can be found on the project website [www.creativeschoolchange.org.uk](http://www.creativeschoolchange.org.uk).

We asked CP Area Directors to nominate a priority list of three schools that they considered were good examples of CP supported whole school change. The intention was not to produce something about 'best practice'<sup>ii</sup> but rather to look at interesting cases to see what might be learned from them – what Connell (1995 p. 90) calls 'strategic sampling' with a potentially 'high theoretical yield'. The research team then selected 40 schools to ensure a balance of primary, secondary, rural and urban, and to ensure a diversity of language and cultural heritage school populations. Schools were invited to participate in a brief research encounter which occurred over two consecutive days. Initial school visits were conducted in pairs of various team combinations, to ensure reliability in data collection procedures. The bulk of the visits were carried out by single researchers.

Acacia Primary School	Larch Centre
Alder College	Laurel College
Apple Tree College	Lilac Tree Primary School
Ash College	Lime Tree Primary School
Aspen Primary School	Magnolia Primary School
Bay Tree Primary School	Maple Technology School
Beech Tree College	Mimosa Nursery School
Birch Primary School	Mulberry Primary School
Blackthorn Federation	Oak Tree Primary School
Cedar Special School	Pear Tree Primary School
Cherry Tree Junior School	Pine Tree Primary School
Chestnut Secondary School	Plumtree College
Cypress Primary School	Poplar Primary School
Elder Tree Primary School	Redwood Primary School
Elm Primary School	Rowan Nursery and Infant School
Fir Tree Nursery School	Silver Birch High School
Foxglove Community School	Sycamore Comprehensive School
Hawthorn Secondary School	Walnut First School
Hazel Primary School	Whitebeam College
Juniper Primary School	Willow Special School

**Figure 1: Snapshot schools** (See our website for full details of each school)

In each snapshot school, relevant documentation was collected: this included CP reports, newsletters, reports to governors, annual reports, documentary evidence on websites and news clippings. An individual interview was conducted with the head or relevant member of the senior management team and with a key school governor, together with a focus group of teachers and another of students of mixed ages: some individual teacher interviews were also conducted. These interviews were taped and transcribed. Photographs of the entrance and relevant displays were taken. Informal conversations in staffrooms, play areas and offices, together with observations, were recorded in field notes. There was thus some degree of triangulation of data, although all participants in formal interviews were selected by the school.

After the production of the interim report<sup>iii</sup> we selected twelve schools which we decided would be able to tell us something more about school change (see Table 1). During the first six months of the project one of the schools, Alder College, was told that it was facing closure. Because we thought it might not be helpful to have researchers in the school when it was heavily engaged in debates about its survival,

we decided to select another site which had been high on our selection list, Blackthorn Federation. However because we had already paid one of our three visits to the case study schools at this time, and because we subsequently had difficulty getting access to Blackthorn, the data we have for both Alder College and Blackthorn are not robust<sup>iv</sup>. We therefore effectively have eleven case study sites, rather than twelve.

The criteria for selection included coverage of sectors (primary, secondary), some schools which were highly culturally diverse and some which were not and schools in various settings (rural, urban). We focused in particular on the degree to which the school had taken up creativity as a whole school ethos (we selected eight where this was the case, three where the school had a preceding innovation and one which we judged to be on the cusp of moving into a whole school approach). These initial judgments, made on the basis of snapshot data, were not always confirmed as we advanced the case studies. Our final criterion was stability: we did not want to be in a school which was struggling with external events as well as trying to manage its own change trajectory. This aspiration was not fulfilled. As it turned out a number of the schools experienced leadership turnover during the project or just after it finished, and some also faced closure (see Table 1).

School pseudonym	Description
Chestnut Secondary School	Comprehensive school out of special measures but in National Challenge. Head teacher left towards end of project.
Elm Primary School	Expanding junior school in rural setting. Headteacher resigned just after project finished.
Hazel Primary School	Successful inner-city school, now part of federation. Former head teacher is executive head of federated schools.
Juniper Primary School	'Satisfactory but improving' (Ofsted) inner city primary school on split sites, undergoing rebuild during the period of our research.
Mimosa Nursery School	OfSTED judged 'good' nursery school, recently designated a Children's Centre, serving a suburban estate.
Mulberry Primary School	Multicultural primary school on notice to improve. Headteacher retired early during project.
Oak Tree Primary School	Large inner city primary school with an OfSTED 'notice to improve'.
Plumtree College	Comprehensive school in National Challenge under intense scrutiny by LA for 'results'. School pulled out of CP just after project finished.
Rowan Nursery and Infant School	OfSTED judged 'good' nursery and infant school serving inner city estate. Potential amalgamation in the future.
Silver Birch High School	Catholic (non-grammar) High School in town with several grammar schools. Ofsted classification: 'good'.
Sycamore Comprehensive School	Specialist secondary school in National Challenge on notice to become an academy.
Alder College	Innovative secondary school given notice of closure
Blackthorn Federation	Federated special, primary and secondary schools

**Table 1: School descriptors**

These kinds of changes are not unusual in the current circumstances. CP deliberately set out to serve schools in challenging circumstances and these schools are not only the object of a range of policy interventions (National Challenge, OfSTED categories, federation, becoming academies) but are also the schools known to have leadership and other staff turnover and also staff morale and well-being issues.

Our goal was to generate data over time rather than to produce intensive ethnographic studies of sites, and to focus on commonalities and experiences that might be generalised, rather than emphasise the uniqueness of a school's experience. Nevertheless, we hoped to produce data which located school change in the context of a rich school culture and thus had an ethnographic feel, and which would allow us to tell not only the common stories of change, but also to some extent to separate out individual institutional narratives, and to recognise, through collecting evidence from a range of sources, the local complexities of change. (We hope to do justice to the richness of our data by producing portraits of some of the case study schools which will be published as a scholarly book at a future date).

We aimed to visit each school three times and to continue to interview staff engaged with CP, to observe lessons and CP activities, to talk with students and to discuss with a member of the SLT the progress of change. We sought evidence of change across many areas of school activity:

- o structure (timetable, CPD organisation, budget, staffing)
- o culture (ethos, publications, spatial organisation, visual symbols, events, dominant narratives)
- o student attendance, participation, engagement, social learning, motivation, autonomy, collaboration, community links
- o teacher repertoires of practice (pedagogy, assessment, differentiation, intellectual resources, negotiation with students), collaboration, community links, CPD participation
- o parent/carer engagement with the school (governance, curricular and extra-curricular activities)
- o school-partner links, community relations and networks (including with other schools and agencies)
- o external reputation (Ofsted, Artsmark, specialist status, media reportage, CP and other documentation).

Since our visits spanned two school years we collected school planning documents and reports which represented and indicated directions for change. We interviewed the CP regional directors in each of the areas in which the schools were located as well as creative practitioners who were in the schools during our visits. Photographs and field notes were also produced on each of the three visits. However because researchers were only able to see what the school wanted to make available, there is some variability in the categories of data for each site, with some having more interviews, for example, than others. Our aim to shadow two pupils for a full school day in each site was also variously accomplished.

Site visits were conducted by three field researchers (McGregor, Owen, Sanders) who each had four sites. Three desk researchers (Hall, K. Jones, Thomson) also had four sites which they visited on one field trip together with the researcher: each desk researcher worked with two field researchers across four sites. A further desk researcher (S. Jones) was engaged in analysis of data across all of the sites. After each round of field work, and when key transcripts were available, the research team held a two day meeting at which emerging themes for each site were developed: these were also used to inform the subsequent visit. Desk researchers (Hall, K Jones and Thomson) have also carried out subsequent analyses of data across the corpus.

We should say something – that is, make some methodological remarks - about the perspectives from which such analyses were made. We were interested, first, in the

'journeys' that schools were making, and the ways in which they explained these journeys to themselves, as part of a process of creating an institutional identity. We were interested in what interviewees took as creativity and as whole school change, what examples they produced, and how they represented to us and to others the changes that they attributed to CP. In this sense our work began from what we hope is a standpoint of affirmation: we wanted to give recognition to the commitment, practical energies and impacts that we found in the work of schools, and at other levels of CP. We tried to understand these qualities in contextualised ways: we saw them as springing from a combination, on the one hand, of resources provided by national programmes, and, on the other, of local situations – of the histories and current predicaments of schools and communities. This 'two-way look' seems to us an important feature of our methodology, one which has enabled us to highlight both the commonalities and the situation-dependent diversity of school change.

We also had other working assumptions. The first of these was that in the course of the work schools would find themselves facing the constraints of other educational agendas that impinged upon creativity – issues of performance measurement and of differentiation on grounds of ability stood out in this respect. (Schools, of course, were as aware of these complexities as we were.) The second was that 'creativity' as we encountered it would be a baggy, uncertain and contested term, to which schools would give meaning in diverse ways, with significantly different educational effects. Thirdly, we did not expect to find that a school's change process would develop smoothly and synchronically, across all levels of the institution: we looked for connections and disconnections between policies and practices, between leadership commitments and patterns of teaching and learning, between established ways of working (by no means always conservative) and new demands (by no means in their entirety 'progressive'). We anticipated – correctly, we think – that similar issues of constraint, diversity and unevenness would affect the working of relationships beyond the school, with regional and national CP bodies, and that the forms taken by such relationships would have an impact on what schools did.

These perspectives led us to underline the ways in which the change process was pursued in the shadow of larger educational developments. Given that 'creative school change', though occurring on an increasingly wide scale, is a relatively small corner of an educational landscape still strongly shaped by regulative demands, this would seem to provide a reasonable lens through which to view it. But our account was not intended to be one-sidedly deterministic: we wanted to establish the tensions and difficulties of change as elements with which schools, far from regarding submissively, were in many cases in constructive negotiation; we were particularly concerned to see what steps the school had taken towards making changes sustainable in the longer term when CP funding finished.

## Chapter 1: WHOLE SCHOOL CHANGE

### The context for school change

England is not alone in attempting to make radical changes to its school system. Across the world there is a concern about the overall level of attainment of school students and its adequacy as the foundation for life in what is sometimes called the 'knowledge society'. There are also concerns about the gap between those at the top of the attainment tables and those at the bottom. Considerable international and national efforts have gone into understanding the nature and causes of this 'achievement gap', accompanied by critiques of the adequacy of measures used. The concern to deal with this persistent educational inequity has shaped international and national policy approaches in particular ways.

Two international trends are apparent, what we might call the standards approach and the creativity approach<sup>v</sup>. These two trends are sometimes combined. In some places (eg Singapore) where creativity is seen as vital to the national economic future<sup>vi</sup>, the combination means significant changes to a highly centralised curriculum without threatening already high standards. This is not the same as in England, where there is still a concern for raising standards. The English policy approach initially maintained a tight centralised command and control structure, and this did leverage gains. These are now generally agreed to be diminishing and the new approach can be seen as a mixture of both standards and creativity. There is intense scrutiny and pressure on the apparently under-performing, but also much more local autonomy for those seen to be performing combined with a range of initiatives which encourage and incentivise 'bottom up' professionally-led reform<sup>vii</sup>.

CP operates both within and against this policy agenda, since it not only works in schools that are performing but also those that are 'under-performing'. It offers an analysis that creative approaches to pedagogy and school design are required to revitalise and regenerate learning in 'hard to shift' sites, as well as being better for schools that are already 'performing'. This position is not universally shared.

School change is of course not the same as government initiated policy since what schools can and want to do is affected by other factors, as we will explain a little later.

### Policy driven change

It is important to state at the outset of the report our understandings of how change occurs.

We hold that policy – be it the standards or creativity agendas or any other, such as Every Child Matters<sup>viii</sup> - is not simply delivered or implemented. It is altered – refracted /diffracted at several points – the region, the local authority, the school, the classroom. This happens no matter how tightly steerage is imposed from above - it is just a matter of the degree of variation. However the degree to which local schools are able to impose their own meanings on what they are able to do is contested terrain. Some hold that local and regional activities are less autonomous now than they were some decades ago, and that national needs and agendas inevitably name and frame what can be conceived and accomplished. Others are

more optimistic and see the possibility of significant variations in local services which meet bespoke needs and desires.

A local version of change can be called vernacular change (Appadurai, 1996; Lingard, 2000; Thomson, 1999). Vernacularisation at a local level does not mean a completely unique interpretation. Rather, it means that there are specific and particular versions of larger policy agendas able to be constructed. Thus, what happens on the ground is often somewhat different from what policymakers and programme managers envisage. To translate this into education, we might say that what schools can do is both patterned through international, national and local social/economic/cultural relations and framed and delimited by political and policy regimes. Nevertheless regional and local interpretations are possible.

While CP is not a policy, but rather a programme, it follows this vernacularising trajectory. Indeed the CP structure as it was when the research was carried out was one which allowed for significant regional and local variations. CP was interpreted by CP areas, and then within schools. As we will show, this led to considerable variety in what was done and achieved.

At this point we want sound a note of caution about reading the coming story of local differences. These differences may not necessarily be a problem. It may be that the capacity to produce site-specific versions of change is precisely what the education system needs at this point in time. There *are* risks involved in attempting to run a diverse vernacular programme, but there are equally risks involved in attempting to standardise too much, particularly if such attempts follow an audit-oriented standardisations approach.

### **CP as vernacular change**

We understand the change that is produced in schools is affected by a specific constellation of resources, events, histories, populations, relations and institutional practices.

CP is interpreted by area organisations and then by creative agents and/or creative practitioners who bring different histories, resources and understandings to this process. Embodied in these people and embedded in national and area documents, CP enters schools. But schools are variously positioned, not only by national and local authority policies but also by their school mix - the kinds of students who attend the school. School mix is in turn produced from the ways in which, for example, local employment for families, local housing market and policies, patterns of immigration and transport health and welfare policies come together. Schools are also profoundly shaped by the ways in which the marketisation of schooling has occurred, by traditional educational hierarchies and the ways in which school choice is practised and regulated. Schools also have particular histories which shape what it is possible to see, say and do<sup>x</sup>. Schools thus bring to any new initiative a particular set of resources – plant, staff, leadership, networks, organisation, governance – and a set of constructed and taken-for-granted narratives and truths. Schools are also in particular phases of development and have specific views of their possible, preferred and undesirable futures<sup>x</sup>. However, in the school as crucible of change, a unique, distinctive combination of past/present/future always exists. Stories of school change are thus both particular *and* patterned stories.

This report attempts to capture both the commonalities and some of the distinctiveness of the sites we studied. Our goal in this analysis has been to try to understand the differences in ways that may help further development while also avoiding a retreat to a default, accountability-driven bureaucratic approach.

### **Change as school practice**

To complicate things further, it is important to understand – as we stressed above, in our account of our methodological starting points - that school change in itself is not a single thing or indeed a singular event.

Researchers suggest that school change is not linear; it often proceeds in stop-starts, takes directions that are eventually rejected, and key goals and practices require revisiting and refreshing. Change is often not evenly spread across a whole institution and the problem with 'pockets of innovation' is well documented. Successful change requires considerable investment, takes time (usually longer than political time scales allow) and needs staff ownership, professional development and structured support that promotes reflection.

Change operates according to the Goldilocks principle: it is important to get just the right amount and the right combination. Too much change can fragment effort and diffuse impact. Too little change leads to entropy. Too much top-down steerage leads to lack of ownership. Too much bottom-up change leads to frustrated effort, and lack of sustainability, as institutional shifts are not effected. Change that is too fast leaves people behind, and change that is too slow loses what energy and enthusiasm there was at the outset. Getting the focus, mode and pace just right, requires skilful senior leadership and change 'capacity' within the wider staff and school community.

And schools are notoriously hard to change. They have robust grammars which operate as default positions to which things return if no-one is paying attention or making sufficient effort to maintain a different/new practice. Teachers are justifiably concerned that students are not guinea-pigs and research shows that many tend to take up innovations which are congruent with what they believe currently appears to work. Schools are concerned that parents will not accept changes. They are wary of committing to something where resources are limited and finite. Furthermore, innovative schools often find that they are stretched thin as they share their expertise with others, and that key staff are 'poached' for system positions.

As a particular local practice then, school change is fragile and vulnerable.

### **Vernacular engagements**

In Table 2 we summarise the notion of CP as vernacular change which takes different turns in different schools: this expands the information presented earlier in Table 1.

School	Context	Change Priority	CP Engagement
<p><b>Chestnut Secondary</b> Comprehensive, not long out of special measures. Aspiring to be specialist performing arts</p>	<p>New 'fix it' head, high staff turnover and illness. GCSE solution had been vocational education but now in national challenge Head left for new job by the end of the research period, new head keen on CP.</p>	<p>Focus on extra-curricular, regular rituals, based in popular youth and digital cultures, everyday lives and local issues (including urban regeneration). Aim to change local reputation, and to work with other schools.</p>	<p>Strong creative agent led construction of stories of success and possibility. Students became more engaged. Some interesting examples of youth led events and materials. Challenge to get approach into mainstream curriculum.</p>
<p><b>Elm Primary</b> Small, rural, middle class, 'good school'. Expanding from junior to primary, new buildings.</p>	<p>New head. Some experienced staff taken aback by indifferent OfSTED report which demotivated staff. New head left after three years and replacement head opted out of CP.</p>	<p>Extend pedagogies, support cross curriculum work, enthuse staff School also worked on pupil voice and personalised assessment of learning from early years up, separate from CP.</p>	<p>Projects to enhance staff skills, and to produce public 'product' which help form new school identity. Also cross-curriculum projects.</p>
<p><b>Hazel Primary</b> Successful inner-city school, now part of federation.</p>	<p>History of engagement with arts organisations and creativity projects. Experience of large-scale projects, e.g. commissioned opera. Working on a long-term basis with academic researcher, around creativity issues.</p>	<p>Develop integrated approach to curriculum planning – themed half-termly around particular topics. Reconfiguring classroom space through 'pods'. Creativity emphasised in INSET and induction.</p>	<p>Creative practitioner involvement in reconfiguring of classroom space, and in larger-scale work (operas).</p>
<p><b>Juniper Primary</b> Inner city school, socially mixed intake.</p>	<p>History of work with various arts organisations, emphasis on the visual. Strong relationship to resident artist; artist's atelier in the middle of the school. But in process of moving to a new building.</p>	<p>Centred on the move to the new building. Some other things on hold, or scaled down, e.g. in relation to resident artist.</p>	<p>All year groups involved with CP arts-focused projects but some sense among teachers that CP changed and there was a greater CP concern for reports and evaluation.</p>
<p><b>Mimosa Nursery</b> Located in high poverty suburban estate in city</p>	<p>Relatively new head with community arts background, formerly deputy and CP lead in school. Restricted CPD opportunities locally. Judged by OfSTED to be a 'good school'</p>	<p>Develop early years pedagogies. Generate staff development opportunities.</p>	<p>Sustained work with artist who became creative agent and a governor. Staff exploration of assessment, play and drawing. Enthusiastic accessing of CPD nationally and also internationally; development of school-based programme of CPD for localschools and LAs.</p>
<p><b>Mulberry Primary</b> Medium sized primary with 99% EAL and in deprived urban locality</p>	<p>Experienced head encouraged work with nationally recognised expert in drama. Good long term relations with community organisations. School on Ofsted 'notice to improve'. Head retired and new head opted out of CP also abandoning drama work in favour of school improvement approaches.</p>	<p>Strong emphasis on building religious and cultural understandings. Wanted to develop drama into specialisation while consolidating process-based drama approaches.</p>	<p>CP unable to offer what school wanted at first but then supported drama work.</p>

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<p><b>Oak Tree Primary</b> Large inner city multicultural primary</p>	<p>New head. Ofsted 'notice to improve' Staff fragmented.</p>	<p>Need to become 'whole school', enthuse staff and students, work on relationships, establish common language about learning/teaching, engage and motivate pupils</p>	<p>Work on space and aesthetic environment of school led by artists. Analysis of classroom environment led to change in setting by ability. Developing interest in the aesthetic and in international alternatives to school's modes of organisation.</p>
<p><b>Plumtree College</b> Secondary comprehensive serving deprived estate plus older more established middle class community Poor building stock</p>	<p>New head. Pressure from LA to lift results Pointed OFSTED which emphasised better target setting. Poor local reputation. Keen support from small group of staff including new Assistant Principal but CP projects not followed through and school opted out of CP as LA involved them in school improvement project.</p>	<p>Improve local reputation. Improve results.</p>	<p>CP supported student voice, student filmmaking, photography exhibitions, local newspaper. These all raised positive public profile. Largely offered as Gifted and Talented programme and supplementary to mainstream curriculum. CP sat alongside official school improvement which focused on target setting in every lesson and strong performance management regime. Streaming introduced into Year 8.</p>
<p><b>Rowan Nursery and Infants</b> Small school in high poverty suburban estate.</p>	<p>Experienced head, stable staff, clear philosophy of teaching/learning, strong relationships with local community. Possibility of amalgamation with nearby junior school. Ofsted 'good school'</p>	<p>Extend early childhood pedagogies. Develop arts curriculum.</p>	<p>Aimed to increase number of adults working in pedagogical roles with children to include artists and thus broaden learning and experiences. Rejected apprenticeship CPD model of working with artists.</p>
<p><b>Silver Birch High</b> Catholic secondary school (non-grammar) in area with selective secondary system Specialist Arts College.</p>	<p>Small secondary school. Explicit sense of school tradition and values.</p>	<p>Develop stronger multi-cultural awareness and 'creative' pedagogies and approaches in particular subject areas.</p>	<p>CP-related work arts focussed. No large-scale project. CP ran half-day INSET on creative teaching and learning. Creative practitioners worked in a number of subject areas – e.g. geography, history, music.</p>
<p><b>Sycamore Comprehensive</b> Medium sized specialist business and enterprise college Located in middle class area but serving nearby estate. Comprehensive in grammar school system.</p>	<p>New head. High staff turnover, declining enrolment. Pushing for academy status and federation. Concerned for local reputation, staff morale. Strong partnership with national hotel chain. Implementing performance management as QA. National challenge school. Strong narrative of school as serious risk takers. Challenge to spread and embed pockets of innovation.</p>	<p>Support and develop enterprise and risk taking. Improve reputation and results.</p>	<p>Strong PR focus. Support for enterprise and to develop new Year 7 with creative thinking skills at core. Pupil voice initiatives, including pupils as researchers and as junior entrepreneurs. Some changes to physical infrastructure.</p>
<p><b>Alder College</b> Highly innovative secondary school in new build serving deprived rural locality</p>	<p>Founding head retired. Pressure to improve results and persuade local community of the vision.</p>	<p>CP to extend but also validate school innovations</p>	<p>Hard to differentiate CP from rest of school – only as 'projects'.</p>

<p><b>Blackthorn Federation</b> Federation of three schools from 2006 on a new purpose built PFI funded site in an area of mixed housing in a town</p>	<p>Federation comprises a primary, a successful special school and an 'under-performing' secondary. Federated governing body and shared leadership and management. Executive Head formerly head of the special school.</p>	<p>Create a 'village' community on the new site. In particular, challenge and change ways of working in the secondary school.</p>	<p>Projects and invited shows. Personalised, enterprise driven curriculum. Book produced by CP funded project recording building of new school. CP used to support vocational work with the creative sector.</p>
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**Table 2: Vernacular change**

Specific school values also played out strongly in the ways in which CP was taken up in the school. Three secondary schools serve to illustrate this point:

- (1) Chestnut Secondary School was characterised by its commitment to inclusion. Despite having to conform to an externally imposed standards/targets agenda in order to advance beyond special measures, staff saw that attendance, engagement and participation could be changed through a combination of exciting large scale extra curricular activities that changed the school culture, activities which focused on the 'real world' of the students - involvement in housing regeneration, recognition and extension of popular youth cultural pursuits and taking on issues such as teenage pregnancy. Their CP activities worked with local 'funds of knowledge' as this fitted with their school philosophy.
- (2) Sycamore Comprehensive School in contrast was strongly committed to activities which promoted enterprise and the kinds of skills required for the new knowledge and services economy. CP activities were thus directed towards instituting a 'creative skills' approach in the junior years, while attempting to move the kinds of vocational and enterprise oriented activities out of a senior school enclave and across the school. Students were encouraged to engage in activities that were business-like: for example the Student Council was re-badged as a Junior Chamber of Commerce.
- (3) Silver Birch was a Catholic High School and Specialist Arts College. A non-selective school in a town with several grammar schools, it had a strong religiously-informed pastoral ethos. It was undergoing a slow and deliberate process of cultural change, in which CP-related activity had an important part. Features of this change included attention to 'creative' teaching, the launching of arts education projects of many kinds, and an internationalist emphasis to arts work.

There were considerable advantages in CP taking schools for what they were and 'where they were at'. Schools were extremely appreciative of a programme which did not seek to impose a blueprint. Our data show - and we expand further on this later in the report - that school staffs felt they were in control of events and could largely direct where interventions occurred. Approaching schools in this way thus had the advantage of avoiding the well-documented problems of imposed change. But it also raised questions about whether CP became embedded in existing norms and values rather than challenging/changing them. This is an issue raised in comparable research into the A+ school reform project in the US, where researchers documented the phenomenon of 'it's what we've always been doing' (Gordon & Patterson, 2008). This is something we also heard a lot<sup>xi</sup>.

### **Engaging with CP**

In the snapshot report we observed that initially, some heads were attracted to CP simply by the prospect of additional funding for extra-curricular and 'add on' project activities, before realising the potential of Creative Partnerships to support school development. However, many heads were already committed to the promotion of the arts in their schools and saw CP as an opportunity to extend this further.

*... my main love is the creative arts; to me it opens doors; it creates memory and it's very powerful for all children, and it brings things out in those children who you feel are not keeping up academically. ... And also, when things get tough, as*

*they do for our children around here, having a link to the creative arts is sometimes good for the soul. (primary HT)*

These heads equated creativity with the arts and discovered through participation in the programme, that CP intended more than this. Creativity was not confined to the arts, nor did it simply equate to new ways of teaching. Rather, it was a way of re-conceptualising children's learning across all subject areas, in and out of the classroom, and within and against the mandated curriculum (Craft, Jeffrey, & Leibling, 2001).

However, the vast majority of the snapshot school heads and their staffs believed that the policy wheel was turning. They felt that the days when the prescribed curriculum stifled creative learning-teaching practice, and alienated particular groups of children, were coming to an end. Heads and teachers alike were critical of the ways in which the national curriculum failed some students.

*Not all of our youngsters walk through the door every morning well disposed to the notion of learning. They are not passive, empty vessels who file into a classroom ready to be filled with knowledge and skills, and so we have to be very creative sometimes in order to engage them. (HT secondary)*

They wanted to find ways to enliven the curriculum, while fulfilling statutory obligations.

*I see myself as working towards changing the curriculum to make it exciting, to make it interesting, to take away a lot of the dullness that exists. ( HT primary)*

Some had clear ideas of what they wanted in place of the national curriculum and why.

*... one of the big reasons we wanted to go for Creative Partnerships was about moving to a skills-based curriculum, and we wanted to develop the students' ability to be creative and inventive. We want them to be flexible workers and team players; all of those soft skills that the government has now decided are important again. ... one of the disadvantages of the way that the curriculum is structured is that it doesn't allow for that kind of thing because of assessment and testing. And the biggest barrier to learning is the assessment regime that we operate under. (HT Sycamore)*

In general, heads in the snapshot schools saw that some kind of cross curriculum, thematically based work was desirable. In some instances this was across some subject areas, and in other cases, it was across some year levels. Heads and their staffs generally reported:

- o a rejection of many of the elements of the technician and rational mode of curriculum in which the teacher is 'deliverer', the students are passive learners divided on the basis of ability/performance and there are absolute, permanently bounded subjects, and
- o the adoption of elements of a 'practical' approach to curriculum where the strongest students are encouraged to go beyond the basics, but where there is a strong emphasis on vocational and life 'skills' and 'self esteem', and/or
- o the adoption of elements of a 'progressive' approach in which the teacher is a facilitator and students are unique individuals who are encouraged to learn

through problem solving, collaborative work and extensions of their own experiences and interests (after Cooper & White, 2004, p. 21) Heads saw these as directions that were officially sanctioned by CP. In their interviews they suggested that CP would allow them to break out of the boundaries established by a prescriptive national curriculum.

An initial meeting between staff of a primary school and CP representatives engendered 'a realisation that they could take ownership of the curriculum and develop it better to engage their children'. Another head believed that 'this gave us a poetic license to develop the curriculum more creatively'. One primary head told us

*But once they (CP) started talking about the philosophy behind it I thought that finally someone is saying what I've wanted to hear all these years. It was about children taking ownership and teachers being able to use their imaginations and do what they feel is right.*

But engaging with CP did not negate the anxieties associated with the press for accountability and standards, specifically test and exam results. One head (Rowan) said that 'Everybody said that our results would go down if we started doing something creative ...'. She matched test results to periods of CP activity to show that they rose correspondingly so that, 'they will say that the creative approach is the right one'. Another head of a primary school was firmly focused on justifying creativity:

*...we would like to be able to say with confidence that creativity is instrumental in raising achievement because that is the only argument that the government is going to listen to. ... They only want to know that being creative in Year 1 will mean that they are going to get Level 4 or 5 in Year 6. ... somehow we have to say that progress and attainment is affected positively by a child's engagement in creative activities and thinking creatively.*

The Chestnut HT, under pressure to improve results, used CP projects to enhance the quality of coursework: he hoped this would have an impact on outcomes:

*I know there is a lot of good stuff going on here but the one thing that is still not right is exam results. They were still poor and I knew if we didn't do something about that quickly then we would be in danger .. So what I said to the CP co-ordinator at that time was that I didn't wish to interfere but you need to understand that just giving kids nice experiences is not enough. However you evolve these projects you will have to demonstrate to me that they will have an impact on outcomes; it's got to add something in terms of our abilities to raise attainment.*

Although involvement with CP was seen as an opportunity to break away from curriculum constraints, promote the arts, accelerate change and enhance reputation, the tensions between 'the standards agenda' and aspirations for more flexible and creative approaches to teaching and learning were often acute. While the ambition for more enjoyable schooling is not at odds rhetorically with 'standards', snapshot school heads were very aware that they and their school stood or fell on the policy reality of 'measurable' attainment and exam results. The temptation for heads in such situations is to play safe and stick with prescribed curriculum and lesson

formats. This was the case for many of the snapshot heads in this study – but not all. Nor was it the case that the schools most under pressure were the most timid.

Digging deeper into the data, we now offer three different heuristics to help understand what the case study schools did and what happened. They are to do with WHERE the schools started off, WHAT they did, and HOW they related to CP.

**(1) WHERE - starting points for CP related change**

The starting ‘point’ of CP activities in schools – that is where the schools decided to start their partnerships activities with CP - varied (Table 3).

Focus	Taken as a starting point	Taken up later
Changing the way pupils learn – a focus on creativity as teaching method	Mulberry Primary Rowan Nursery and Infants Elm Primary Hazel Primary Juniper Primary Plumtree College	Chestnut Secondary
Changing the way learning is organised – a focus on blurring disciplinary boundaries	Elm Primary Sycamore Comprehensive Blackthorn Alder College Hazel Primary Plumtree College	
Changing the way learning is assessed – a focus on providing more creative means through which students can represent and demonstrate learning	Mimosa Nursery	Elm Primary
Changing what counts as learning – a focus on expanding knowledge and skills beyond the national curriculum	Chestnut Secondary Mimosa Nursery Rowan Nursery and Infants Sycamore	
Changing who teaches – a focus on changing the composition of the school workforce on a permanent basis	Mimosa Nursery	Rowan Nursery and Infants
Changing the school culture – a focus on changing the symbolic systems and/or enrichment activities of the school and/or relationships with parents/community members and organisations	Chestnut Secondary Silver Birch High Blackthorn Alder College Sycamore Plumtree College	Oak Tree Primary
Changing the school organization – a focus on changing the spread of leadership, and/or the distribution of time/money/space, and/or the decision-making structures	Oak Tree Primary Blackthorn Alder College	

**Table 3: Starting points for CP related change**

While CP has as its priority the development of creative learning this meant different things in different places. This variation was to be expected. Because there is no a predictable linear movement from one ‘stage of change’ to another as is often implied in evaluation documents that offer linear steps for change<sup>xii</sup>, some schools began by looking at learning and others eventually got to it after having attended to other activities which they felt needed to happen first. Some schools also had multiple starting points rather than just one.

**(2) WHAT - dominant change strategy**

As well as beginning points differing, there was also variation in what schools saw as the activity or sets of activities that would promote change.

<b>Creative approach</b>	
Big collaborative productions and performances	Hazel Primary, Alder, Plumtree College
Employing artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods	Rowan Nursery and Infants, Mimosa Nursery, Juniper Primary
Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism	Sycamore, Blackthorn
Linking creative practices to youth culture and the creative industries	Chestnut Secondary
Focusing on teachers' understanding of creativity in their professional lives	Oak Tree Primary, Mimosa Nursery, Elm Primary, Mulberry Primary, Silver Birch High

**Table 4: Creative approaches**

Each of these approaches produced different effects in the schools, with the nursery and infant schools which had employed artists for continued periods showing evidence of the most embedded change<sup>xiii</sup>, as we explain later. By contrast one of the secondary schools which had a long term engagement with a Creative Agent had demonstrably changed in very positive ways the activities associated with the rhythms of the school year.

**(3) HOW - affiliation with CP**

Schools variously described themselves as 'creative' and we take this as a measure of ownership of the creative agenda. We describe the degree to which schools saw themselves and acted as 'a creative school' – that is, this is their identity – as an indication of their affiliation with CP and its goals. We use three categories of affiliation, modified from those used in the US A+ schools research (Noblit, Dickson, Wilson, & McKinney, 2009). The three categories are:

- *Affiliative* – a school adopts the formal designation of CP, uses the logo, staff attend CPD activities, CP activities are highlighted in internal and external reports of activities
- *Symbolic* – most school staff acknowledge the importance of creativity, enthusiastically celebrate creative activities, couch description of their activities in terms of creativity
- *Substantive* – most school staff consider creativity when making decisions about school operation and make repeated attempts to use creative approaches and practices in subject instruction.

It is noteworthy that affiliation and values come together in interesting ways: 'we are a CP school, but we are *this* kind of school' (caring, risk taking etc).

Our proposition is that in order to effect 'creative school change' schools must have a substantive affiliation to the goal of creative learning/teaching, as expressed in general terms through CP. We can also think of this affiliation as becoming part of the CP family, taking up the creativity brand, or forging a specific school identity.

Each has different implications for the ways in which schools approach the core change dimension of creative learning/teaching.

Affiliation	School	
Substantive	Rowan Nursery and Infants Hazel Primary Mimosa Nursery Oak Tree Primary	
		Elm Primary, symbolic moving to substantive but then opted out of programme with change of head
Symbolic	Chestnut Secondary Silver Birch High	
		Juniper Primary, symbolic moving back to affiliative
Affiliative	Sycamore Blackthorn	
		Plumtree College affiliative but them opting out of programme altogether Mulberry Primary, unable to affiliate Alder, affiliated CP to its own agenda

**Table 5: Degrees of affiliation to CP**

### Summary

It is useful to summarise where the case study schools sat against these heuristics (Tables 4, 5, 6), and we will add to this summary in the next section on learning. It is important to note that this sample is too small to develop any robust theorisation of generalisable patterns at this point. However it might be noteworthy that all but one of the secondary schools started with changing school culture and tackling what counts as learning, i.e. largely outside the national curriculum with, in some cases, the intent of moving inwards.

School	Beginning points	Creative approaches	Affiliation
<b>Chestnut Secondary</b> Comprehensive, not long out of special measures. Aspiring to be specialist performing arts	Changing what counts as learning. Changing the school culture. Moved to focus on directly on creative learning at a mid point	Linking creative practices to youth culture and creative industries	Symbolic
<b>Elm Primary</b> Small, rural, middle class, 'good school'. Expanding from junior to primary, new buildings.	Changing the way pupils learn, changing the way learning is organised. Later, took up assessment issues.	Focus on teachers' understanding of creativity.	Symbolic moving to substantive but then opted out
<b>Hazel Primary</b> Successful inner-city school, now part of federation.	Changing the way pupils learn, changing the way learning is organised	Collaborative performances	Substantive
<b>Juniper Primary</b> Inner city school, socially mixed intake.	Changing the way pupils learn	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time	Symbolic moving back to affiliative
<b>Mimosa Nursery</b> Located in high poverty suburban estate in city	Changing the way learning is assessed. Changing what counts as learning, changing	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time; focus on teachers'	Substantive

	who teaches	understandings of creativity	
<b>Mulberry Primary</b> Medium sized primary with 99% EAL and in deprived urban locality	Changing the ways pupils learn	Struggled to find a way to engage but did focus on developing teachers' understandings of creativity as teaching method	Unable to affiliate
<b>Oak Tree Primary</b> Large inner city multicultural primary	Changing school organisation, changing the school culture	Focus on teachers' understanding of creativity	Substantive
<b>Plumtree College</b> Secondary comprehensive serving deprived estate plus older more established middle class community Poor building stock	Changing school culture, changing the way pupils learn	Big collaborative productions	Affiliative but opted out
<b>Rowan Nursery and Infants</b> small nursery and infant school in high poverty suburban estate	Changing the way pupils learn, changing what counts as learning, changing who teaches	Employing artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods	Substantive
<b>Silver Birch High</b> Catholic secondary school (non-grammar) in area with selective secondary system Specialist Arts College.	Changing school culture	Multiple projects focusing on teachers' understanding of possibilities opened by creative approaches	Symbolic
<b>Sycamore Comprehensive</b> Medium size specialist business and enterprise college Located in middle class area but serving nearby estate. Comprehensive in grammar school system.	Changing the way learning is organised, changing what counts as learning and school culture	Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism	Affiliative
<b>Alder College</b> Highly innovative secondary school in new build serving deprived rural locality	Focus on blurring disciplinary boundaries, changing school culture and organisation	Big performances	Affiliated CP to its own agenda
<b>Blackthorn Federation</b> Federation of three schools from 2006 on a new purpose built PFI funded site in an area of mixed housing in a town	Blurring disciplinary boundaries, changing school culture, changing school organisation	Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism	Affiliative

**Table 6: Summary of vernacular changes**

## Chapter 2: LEARNING

CP has as its primary goal the reform of students' learning. In what follows, we approach reform from two perspectives. The first is concerned with the understandings of teachers and the organisation of classroom experience; it relies heavily on description and interview. The second perspective is based on a more general, heuristic approach that seeks to classify the different ways in which creativity-influenced approaches configure teaching and learning.

### Intellectual resources for teaching

As we suggested earlier, schools approach the creativity agenda in ways that are conditioned by educational and social histories and situations. These provide teachers who face the challenge of change with intellectual resources of greater or lesser utility. Staff in the primary case study schools were more likely than those in secondary schools to claim ownership of a shared philosophy of education. Teachers in several of the primary schools stressed that the school shared, or was developing, a common orientation, crucial to its development. The perception was that 'the only way you can have school change is that you have to work with and through the staff and they have to have ownership.' (HT Mulberry Primary)

The resources that supplied such a philosophy were various. In primaries, some version of child-centredness was important, whether it stemmed from an earlier generation of educational practice, or whether it was more recently located. A headteacher explained the importance of 'holding on' – through the successive waves of policy change – to 'the philosophy that you believe to be true'. 'Fortunately,' she added, 'I have another member of staff who trained at a similar time to me and we are actually going back, in a way, to the training that we had and we were well used to.' (HT Rowan Nursery and Infants) For another school leader, child-centredness was accounted for more in terms of the influence of Reggio Emilia, though he insisted that any such influence had to be vernacularised, so that it fitted the most local of circumstances:

*I think, essentially, we were trying to follow some of the principles of the Reggio approach but we were not trying to do Reggio, because you can't; we were trying to look at some of their philosophies and those of other people and try and find something that **worked for us in this area with our staff, our building, our parents, our everything**. We were trying to build something of our own rather than copy what other people have done. And one of the main things about that was trying to follow the interests of the children ... rather than trying to inflict a curriculum on to the children actually. (HT, Mimosa Nursery).*

He spelled out what following the interests of children involved:

*(Say) this child is really interested in Power Rangers – whatever we think about Power Rangers – so let's open ourselves up to that and see what opportunities it gives us to incorporate literacy and numeracy? And not to hijack their play and make it into something that we want. It's not about that. It's about ... they are not interested in maths; there might be other times when they are doing math things spontaneously and that's when we will capitalise on the maths but this is to do with imaginative play; social*

*relations; power relationships. So let's think about that because that's actually what is going on. Let's not think about what we want to impose.* (HT, Mimosa Nursery).

Teachers in other schools, especially those working at the Foundation Stage, echoed this view: 'it's this idea of a children-focused leaning and we are just here to guide that learning' (Teacher, Juniper Primary).

Distinct to some extent from child-centredness was an emphasis on 'connected' or 'integrated' learning, in which almost the entire curriculum was organised around half-termly topics, shared across year groups, and advocated in terms that praised the 'embedding of understanding' that it involved, and the 'overarching questions' that it allowed to be addressed. In this way, 'children understand their own learning – they talk about their learning – children take charge' (Teacher, Hazel Primary).

### **A language of contrast**

These ideas provided teachers with a critical vantage-point on other approaches to educational change. To a greater or lesser extent, all of the case study schools positioned their creative practice against the various frameworks that regulate learning and teaching, and a language of contrast was thus commonplace.

The National Curriculum, for instance, was seen by many teachers more as a constraint than a resource. A headteacher said that she had been attracted to Creative Partnerships as a 'really important initiative' that would make up for 'what what had been lost with the introduction of a National Curriculum in terms of deep learning; deep understanding and creativity and all those things which make up an educated person which we know the National Curriculum doesn't'. (HT, Hazel Primary). Speaking about the effects of the national curriculum on the children in her class, one primary teacher conveyed a feeling that 'curriculum constraints could force her into almost doing harm to the children: there was not enough time to develop interests and ideas; things were not active enough (especially for the boys); there was not enough speaking and listening; there was not enough individualisation.' (Fieldnote: Teacher, Rowan Nursery and Infants). The National Literacy Strategy was something that 'none of us could bear any longer' (HT, Hazel Primary) and 'QCA guidelines', likewise, were seen as a 'restrictive force, closing down all that good Foundation work'. An affiliation to CP provided a means for 'trying to ... continue to deliver that creativity in Key Stage 1 right the way up to Year 6' (Teacher, Juniper Primary).

SATs were another imposition, that teachers 'knew in their hearts were wrong'; they were 'fools' for 'making the SATs work' (HT Elm Primary). OfSTED was another threat, 'putting teachers off change' (HT Elm Primary) and local authorities were seen by some as another 'constraint' on creativity, with their 'Inset courses about intervention' (Teacher, Plumtree College). 'More and more over ... time' said one headteacher, 'they've left us alone because I actually don't think they've got anything to offer us and they don't understand what we're doing, which is really sad' (HT Rowan Nursery and Infants).

### **Compromise and combination (1)**

The starkness of the contrast between school commitments and the priorities of other sections of the world of education was in practice mitigated.

Mitigation took several forms. One involved a recognition of the due demands of the National Curriculum, OfSTED and other forms of regulation, and of the limits they set to school-based change: 'Our philosophy in our school is: we can't do anything about the "what" because we have to do it; but we can do an awful lot about the "how".' (HT, Mulberry Primary). A second form rested on a claim that 'creativity' and the demand for 'performance' in test-measured terms were not actually contradictory. We encountered this view in several schools – in Oak Tree Primary, for instance, where the Creative Agent developed an argument that work funded by CP helped develop pupils as 'good citizens', 'in control of their emotions', with concern for their 'impact on people around them'. They achieved well, not because the school was standards-centred, but because it had this ethos. It was learning-centred, and creative, and this helped the pupils with their SATs (Researcher's Notes, CA, Oak Tree Primary).

More widespread than these positions, which imply that the school has gone through an explicit process of balancing the relationship between creativity and performance, was a day-to-day *intermingling* of creative practice with practice derived from other sources. Creative practice thus appeared in combination with other sorts of approach to the organisation of teaching and learning, some of which seemed to us problematic. One relatively frequent combination was between creative practice and differentiation on grounds of ability. In one instance, the analysis provided by creative practitioners led to a primary school's shifting away from setting, less on the grounds of the problems it posed for exclusion than because it brought about frequent and disruptive movement around the school. In-class differentiation, however, remained in place – as it did in most of the primary schools, and teachers habitually employed the language of differentiation – 'gifted and talented', 'middle groups' and so on.

In secondary schools, practices of differentiation were stronger. Two of the secondary schools were organised on the basis of setting. In one we were told by a Deputy Head that:

*the major innovation next year was a tiered curriculum for Year 7 – 9. This was basically putting the bright kids together - the purple band – and the slow kids together – the blue band – with some in the middle. Unlike now when the students were set, they would stay in their bands for all subjects although there would be opportunities to move up – the goal was to not put behaviour problems in the blue band but to have a small number, intensive support and move them out/up. I asked how this was different from streaming and he said it was a mind set – it was about personalisation and giving all students something appropriate and the idea was to move upwards not get stuck at the bottom. Setting up the bands would require a lot of new curriculum to be written and new resources – this was to be the major new expenditure next year. (Researcher's Notes, Plumtree College).*

There was a similar structure in another secondary:

*The Year 7s come in and they've obviously got their SAT levels but what we do is we have them in the school for a couple of weeks where we give them some work and they do different group activities so that we can get a feel of what they are like, and then we put them into sets very much based on their English SATs. And then they stay in one set for all their subjects throughout*

*Year 7. And unless there is something really obvious that comes out of the Year 7 exams, they will stay in the same sets in Year 8. When they get to Year 9 what we are able to do, if the timetable allows us, is to actually set them more for their core subjects and then, obviously, the foundation subjects depending on how the timetable fits so that they can be in slightly different sets throughout Year 9. And then when it comes to Year 10 and 11 they'll be set according to how well they have done in their SATs and obviously on what options they've chosen. But the chosen subjects, most of the time, are mixed ability. So the performing arts and the art are mixed ability. (DH Chestnut Secondary)*

From one point of view, setting or banding was presented as a kind of emancipation from 'academic reading and writing' for the bottom sets, since it allowed them to be 'helped' in a 'more creative way' (DH Plumtree College). There were (unheard) echoes in this of the post-war secondary modern experience. There, too, creativity was associated with a liberation from academic constraint which was also the mark of a third-tier education. This was only one type of configuration, however. As Plumtree College students noted, the 'help' provided by CP-initiated projects was sometimes extended in another direction. 'The A band have permanent teachers,' said one lower band student. At Chestnut Secondary, a student in a top set described a trip abroad: 'We went to Hungary. Only sets one and two because we were bright and we had to organise the flights, organise everything, the coach, where we stayed.... We had to speak good English.' A Chestnut Secondary teacher suggested that this was a more general pattern: it was 'the more able students' who were 'involved more often' with CP. Creativity was not necessarily synonymous with 'inclusion'.

Differentiation thus combined with 'creative practice' to shape the ways in which teaching and learning were organised. This perhaps problematic and certainly rather unconsidered combination was not the only example of 'intermingling'.

### **Compromise and combination (2)**

Creative practice also combined with other kinds of resource for pedagogic change. In one school, 'creative' approaches to learning (such as 'teaching for understanding') were combined with an assertive strategy for classroom management, 'tracking', which entailed constant teacher intervention to criticise or, more frequently, to praise. In another combination, several schools categorised their pupils as (either) 'Visual' or 'Auditory' or 'Kinaesthetic' learners - 'students here are largely kinaesthetic learners' (HT, Plumtree College) - and it was a hallmark of good practice to develop ways of teaching that embraced all these qualities:

*'We did a whole project about **kinaesthetic teaching and learning** and getting pupils to act through things. I know that in science they've used movement for being molecules and running around the room and performing gases and all sorts of things like that.'* (Teacher, Silver Birch High)

At secondary level, the most striking combination we encountered was the articulation of aspects of progressive educational practice with an emphasis on qualities of 'enterprise'. In the process, progressive education was rethought. Its claim that schools needed to break down the walls between themselves and the 'community' was presented in bold new terms: 'community' resources were those of local business – building firms, for instance:

*Across the road, some rather dinky show homes appeared built by this developer, and the kids were fascinated because they were throwing up these sort of rather chintzy, 3, 4 storey pastel-coloured executive apartments with gated entries and Juliet balconies and all sorts. So the design teacher and I rang them and said, "We're doing design textiles, interior design. Could we come and have a look?" And they said, "Yes, it's unusual but please do." So we brought a gang of Year 11s who were doing an interior design project into the show homes and they thought that this was magic. It was another world to them if you compare it to what they get when they go home. They walked in and could immediately aspire to some sort of fantasy life-style. I call it the 8.00 TV slot where you're looking at the whole thing around changing rooms, and they go, "Oh I could live....," and they have exercise bikes in the bedrooms and they had flat-screened TVs ... The kids were going, "Oh," and microwaves you know, it was just like play home and it got them into drama and role playing, the whole thing, "Imagine if I lived here, what sort of people do live here? How are they different to us because we only live over there?" So it was all this stuff about life-styles and aspirations. (Creative Agent, Chestnut Secondary).*

And again:

*The kids worked with an interior designer, and he was paid by the developer to come up to school to run a 10 week programme where our kids designed fabrics, canvases, textiles, that were actually put into the show home so there was a £159,000 home and you walked in and there was artwork on display by Year 11 at Chestnut, assessed as part of their GCSE, so the kids were coming in, bringing their families in going, "I painted that canvas on the wall in the bedroom." You know, amazing ownership, "Those are my cushions you're sitting on." Tons of publicity, win-win, the company's got publicity, the school got publicity. The kids knew about it so they didn't trash it or come and throw bricks at it when there was a bulldozer outside, and we then got 5 grand from arts and business to develop that as a model for GCSE linking with a private sector partner. (Creative Agent, Chestnut Secondary)*

In this case, familiar themes – the need to recognise students' experiences and capabilities, the need to embed learning in real-life situations – are located in new contexts, with a confidence that closer relations with businesses can produce different kinds of student disposition: 'it's not just about English and maths here; it's about life long learning; it's about supporting other people and making them good model citizens.' (Creative Agent, Chestnut Secondary). A similar idea was voiced by the Pupil Enterprise Manager at another secondary school: 'it's about being an enterprising person and it's nothing to do with business start up, it's having those skills. OK some people will go on to become entrepreneurs but most won't and for those who don't then just having those creative, risk taking skills will adapt them to whatever circumstances they end up in.' (Sycamore).

### **Learning from/in the relationship with CP**

It was plain that the commitment of some schools to creative teaching and learning predated their involvement with Creative Partnerships: ' We've always been child-led but we were becoming more so in our planning and in our observations' (HT, Hazel Primary). Sometimes, it was felt that CP wasn't sufficiently appreciative of this local

history. One school referred to 'battles' with CP about priorities (HT, Mimosa Nursery); another commented, 'they thought they would come in and be the creative thinkers' (HT, Mulberry Primary). But the majority of schools felt that CP allowed them to develop and enrich their work. CP initiatives were both absorbed by, and capable of extending, established practice, as in Rowan Infants School:

*Pencil and paper are almost secondary. You're not always thinking "I must get something into a book, to back it up." You know that people will see our children working and they're using the skills. It's not a case of filling in a worksheet or doing something like that, just to be seen to do something. (It's) fine if there's only one piece of writing out of a fortnight's work to do with something. It doesn't matter that there's no hard copy at the end of it ... Whereas before, we were all very conscious you know, looking in a maths book and realising you've not got anything written in for the week. "We must do some on Friday". But now, we know that these children are using those skills practically, all the time. (HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants).*

In such schools, CP typically served as a stimulus and a 'catalyst' (HT, Hazel Primary) for developments in creative learning. Involvement with CP provided experiences on which to reflect and a link to new pedagogic resources – provided both by creative practitioners, and by wider networks of practice to which CP helped provide entry. The large-scale opera project developed at Hazel Primary, and the mass mobilisation of creative practitioners provided instances of practitioner impact:

*So we had our lead artist in and we said that we were going to try and go a bit further with this. So we came off time table for a full week and the artists just set up everything because we had no idea what we wanted. They just did everything and we had every artist under the sun in here for a week. And that was wonderful, both from the children's point of view and from that of the staff because suddenly they weren't having to do this huge level of planning. And from there we experimented with different artists and, at that point, we were having two or three sessions per half term and that's what CP have paid for. (HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants).*

The effect of involvement in wider networks of thinking and practice was evident in several schools: in Hazel Primary's link with Harvard's 'Project Zero', for instance, and more extensively, through the visits of primary and nursery teachers to Reggio Emilia and Pistoia – encounters which had a strong effect on those who participated in them. These effects were of two kinds. Most visibly, in early years settings, we observed a practice in which a 'local' commitment to child-centred education had been deepened and enriched by understandings developed through the connection to 'Reggio', which was felt to stand for a consistent commitment to principles of child-led creativity. Our field notes on Mimosa Nursery describe situations in which the effects of 'Reggio' seem clear, with physical action, sensory perception and imaginative play being interwoven. The notes bear quoting at some length:

- o Firstly, there was very little direct adult leading of the children; the children chose what they did. They didn't ask and they didn't necessarily refer to adults.
- o Secondly, there was a very high degree of engagement amongst the children and higher levels of absorption in imaginative play than I've seen in a nursery before. There were very few occasions when children wandered between activities.

- o Thirdly, on the Friday particularly, it was much more noisy and there was more running about than would have been permitted elsewhere. There was no shushing of people while they were playing, just when the group talks were taking place. On the Friday four boys were playing excitedly with a big bad wolf toy which you could put your own hands into to grab your victims. This provoked a fair bit of screeching and fleeing across the room which was allowed to continue until it looked like the toy would get damaged. Their boisterousness wasn't seen as a problem in itself.
- o Fourthly, the children were actively encouraged by the staff to get excited. During the parachute game, X threw water onto the parachute and encouraged the children to spatter the water into the air (and onto themselves). They were shrieking with delight at this so she repeated it twice more. Similarly, the day before, there had been an activity splatting large lumps of clay on to a table from as high as the child could manage. X developed this activity by adding water to make it sploshier and an extra table so the clay could slide further.
- o Fifthly, not only could you get messy and be encouraged to, for example, lie on top of the clay to squash it down, but you could help yourself to resources like masking tape, sellotape and string and use as much as you wanted. M, for example, spent a long time during outdoor play fixing long lengths of masking tape on the plastic climbing cubes. Y watched him and didn't interrupt. When he had finished he announced that the floods had come and that people had to keep out because there were germs in the water. I had previously noted that in the group talk with which the day had begun (the three staff have a registration group each) no one had brought up the floods, despite the immediacy of the problem and the impact they were having on some of the children. The staff chatted about family and took their cues from the children.
- o Sixthly, I thought the children were allowed to take more 'risks' than I'd seen elsewhere. The swing in the outdoor play area was a long piece of blue fake fur knotted and hung in the tree. The children had suggested this. Z said that when it broke they'd have to try to find some rope for the swing. A group of boys making a house between two large privet bushes helped themselves to scissors and paper and climbed in with them, over the barricades they'd erected. Nobody told them to move away from the fence adjoining the next door primary school when a bunch of children congregated there to attract them over. At tidying up time, especially outside, children struggled to drag heavy bits of equipment or long wooden planks over to the shed and no one intervened or suggested a safer way of doing the job.
- o Seventhly, the children really seemed to enjoy tidying up. The period was signified by shaking a set of bells and putting some music on and almost all the children set to with enthusiasm. I had never seen small children fold things so neatly ... They did seem to have a sense of it being their space.
- o Eighth, the outdoor play was varied and imaginative. There were bikes and a trolley but also encouragement to make dens, to get in the bushes, to balance on a plank, to wash things down with a sponge roller. The area is larger than is normally the case. There is plenty of grass and no real concern about getting dirty or a bit wet when it starts raining. (Mimosa Nursery, Researcher field notes)

In Mimosa Nursery, principles of creative practice seem to have been systematically developed, as features of a school culture in transformation. In some other schools, the Reggio Emilia connection had a second kind of effect: it provoked teachers' reflections on their own practice to a point where they became highly critical of mainstream educational practice, and critical of their own work, to the point of unhappiness. But this was not all. The experience of aspects of Italian education, alongside a wider exposure to creative practice enabled by CP, led teachers to attempt to go beyond what they felt were the limitations of the system in which they worked (see Figure 2).

The impetus for change was set in motion when a group of teachers from Oak Tree were encouraged and supported by CP to visit Pistoia, in Tuscany, to look at early years education. They discussed their reactions at length. One teacher found it a very emotional experience because of the way the children were central to every thing they do, and the teachers were treated with great respect and allowed to take the children wherever they needed to go in their learning. There was a pedagogy of slowness so that whatever the children wanted to do, they went with that ...' She thinks that the emotion arose from their realisation of 'how wrong the British system of education is' – too focused on testing and literacy and numeracy, with teachers too busy rushing around to reflect on anything and observe.' Another teacher noted 'the intelligence of it. Teachers were proud to regard themselves as educators and take intellectual ownership. (Here) they don't seem to have time to reflect at that level. It's more alien to them to talk about the philosophy of what they do.'

One teacher, June, centrally involved in CP-related work at Oak Tree, felt dejected on returning to Oak Tree:

'I have to say that coming back to Oak Tree then was really hard and I was full of tears walking down the corridor because the aesthetic hits you straight away but also the lack of care for the school. The children don't respect it and there are things all over the floor and there is rubbish and coats. You didn't see that at all in Pistoia because everything had a value. In Pistoia the shelves were all filled with what we would class as rubbish: it was tubing and cardboard rolls. Things that you could use in more than one way and that didn't just say that they should be used in only one way. There were no pre-bought games and so when I went into my classroom I just ripped everything down. I thought: why have I got that up there? That looks foul. Yet I always prided myself on having a really nice classroom that demonstrated the children's learning but I just came in and just ripped everything down and for about two months, until the next lot went to Pistoia, I just didn't know what to do with my displays.'

She tried to do a Pistoia-style display showing process in literacy and trying to document the process of note-taking and research that she had seen in operation in Italy, using quotes, text and photos. It felt contrived because it wasn't based on a different way of working and was driven by her and not the children. She began to feel very unhappy and questioning whether or not teaching was still for her. She'd seen the ideal with enthused and stimulated children and felt that here they were filling children's heads with things they didn't want. Children in Britain can be labelled as failures at four. She thought of individuals in her class who may regard themselves as failures and thought that it was no wonder they sometimes misbehaved - she had a challenging class. She thought that the (Italian) approach was a better model. When the other teachers returned from Pistoia they felt the

same way: part of the emotion arose from their questioning 'How did we go so wrong? Why are we always jumping through hoops?'

Out of this negative experience, June aimed to construct a new practice, informed by what she had seen in Italy. On the first Monday after the holidays, she took the children into the playground to map it any way they chose. While the children worked she made journal entries of her observations of the children and what they said. Arising from this activity the children showed particular interest in measuring distances, so they spent the rest of the day measuring in different ways and looking at equivalence. They represented distances in different ways using string and used the string with paper to make pictures - work that was influenced by earlier activity by creative practitioners at the school.

The next day the children took colour swatches into the playground and looked carefully for objects that matched the colours – another artist-inspired activity. Mindful of the Pistoia 'pedagogy of slowness', June gave the children time to observe closely. Later they all tested hypotheses, suggested by the children, about tones, tints and shades. They then did a litter pick, discovering objects such as syringes, and a beer can full of snails and maggots. This prompted a class discussion on syringes and why snails would be in a beer can. The finding of graffiti led to considering the work of the graffiti artist Banksy. The children wanted to pursue different lines of enquiry. June wondered how she would manage this but the children were enthused and couldn't be stopped.

To encapsulate the learning, June introduced learning logs and the children became learning detectives. Each morning the children think about what they learnt the day before and what questions they want to follow up. The special needs children, Liz commented, thrived on peer support and were exposed to learning that they wouldn't have had in differentiated lessons. No one failed – they had time to work things out. June feels that for the first time in a long time she is an educator with the child in mind rather than an objective in a subject. The children enjoy working that way and don't want to return to a tight structure.'

(Researcher's notes, abbreviated, Oak Tree).

### Figure 2: Oak Tree story

The experience of these three teachers from Oak Tree Primary seems to us to be significant at several levels. First it suggests teachers' sense of the incompatibilities between the 'standards' agenda and what they take to be principles of creative education. This is only partly a matter of the exigencies of curriculum frameworks; it also relates to the *driven* character of the work of the school – tight externally-set deadlines, a constant press of initiatives. Secondly, it suggests something of the *disturbance* that CP has set in motion. Far more is involved, here, than a journey to Italy. It is only because the teachers have already been involved in the attempt to rethink their practice that has been incited by other opportunities offered by CP that 'Pistoia' has had such an impact: it seems to offer a way of realising more fully the possibilities glimpsed in the course of earlier work; and at the same time, it is a reminder of the distance that has still to be travelled. Thirdly, it is both an impressive record of a teacher's resourcefulness and creativity, and an indication of how 'lonely' the work of reconstruction can be: school cultures, even when senior management is in support of creative initiatives, have not often developed to the point where they

can support the systematic elaboration of 'creative' change in pedagogy. (Though in the case of Oak Tree, we know that such an attempt is ongoing.)

### Learning in social contexts

Such projects of change face formidable constraints, both in and beyond school cultures. As we note elsewhere in this report, many of our case study schools were insecure – uncertain of their institutional future, uncertain of the future in store for individual teachers. This had a limiting effect on CP initiatives:

*So people were really open to the ideas and, for a couple of months, the place was buzzing. And that was the CP influence of people coming in and asking us: 'Are you sure that's the best you can do?' And people were at the peer sharing stage but later everybody started to withdraw from it and now the attitude is more: 'I'll do it as and when. The CP influence is not that prominent now. Job security comes first now and if you can't guarantee getting a good report from your latest observation – if you've been criticised or it's gone badly. It's more PC now to make sure that you've got a good reference because you need that rather than being that whacky, creative teacher ... Everybody is under so much pressure that they are sticking to tried and tested methods. They just want their results to be ok. (Teacher, Sycamore)*

Under-pressure schools have a high turnover of managers and staff, and difficulties in recruitment and retention. 'Staff are exhausted,' said a deputy head, 'and at times quite demoralised' (Deputy Head, Plumtree College); and a reliance on temporary teachers likewise blunts the possibilities of creative change:

*We go to a maths lesson which is being covered by a permanent supply (support assistant). There is some engagement with the worksheets given out and M (student) is concentrating but it is noisy. The support assistant asks students how they are doing and goes around the room to help but on several occasions has to leave the room to ask for advice from maths staff. As the lesson goes on there is greater disengagement- maybe 50% are off task. It is very noisy but M is still concentrating and eventually the SA shouts to them to be quiet. I later gather they have not had a permanent Maths teacher this year. (Researcher's notes, Plumtree College).*

This day-to-day experience contributes to a particular view among teachers of student capacity that emphasises the educational effects of deprivation.

*The kids here seem to need a lot of input and support and they don't offer self responsibility for learning. Consequently the ritual at Plumtree seems to be to have a lot of academic support structuring in the teaching which has actually led to the need for that. And this is very much in evidence in English because when the kids are left to do something on their own they flounder. They seem to need teacher support all the time. (DH, Plumtree College).*

This diagnosis of deficiency is in some senses well-founded; it goes along with a clear-eyed recognition of social dimensions beyond the school – 'there is a large social change required and it is not purely a school matter by a million miles' (Deputy Head, Plumtree College). At the same time, however, it is impossible not to be struck by the contrast between the bleak conclusions drawn from this view at Plumtree College, and the 'reading of the social' offered by teachers in other places.

At Rowan Nursery and Infants, for instance – a school at which teachers referred to themselves as ‘bonded’ and ‘long-term’ – the head insisted both on the cultural capacity of her pupils, and on the ways in which creative practice could draw from it. What pupils had learned from their work with a sculptor was evidence of a capacity that should confound easy judgments about the effects of deprivation:

*They're bringing in things they've learnt ... when they've done sculpture work. They understand how to sort of, put structures together. They understand that triangles are the strongest shape you can make. There's just so much in there and I think that in an area like this, there's an expectation quite often from outside, certainly not from the staff in this school, 'Well, inner city children, you know, rough area, are not going to really achieve'. I'm sorry, we can show these children anything they want is possible if channeled.*  
(HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants).

This view of capacity was re-iterated by others at the school.

*Like the headteacher, Ellie lives in the locality of Rowan. She has worked as a community teacher and is or has been involved with various forms of volunteer work (toy library, books for babies). She thinks that parents are supportive of the school; they appreciate it and 'do their best'. She shares with the head an acceptance and apparent lack of judgment of community members, coupled with talk about 'delay' and 'deprivation', referring to language and social and practical experiences. She mentions a child who came to school not knowing her own name and a child in a wheelchair who had never touched grass. She talks about developing language through toys and play. She says she prefers the metaphor of polishing gems, rather than filling jugs, to describe her work.*  
(Researcher's notes, Rowan Nursery and Infants).

This final metaphor – which in the context is devoid of sentimentality – indicates something of the social disposition that underpins aspects of creative practice in urban areas. Based on experience and intuition, it seems to us to represent an understanding that is well worth exploring further.

## Chapter 3: CHANGING PEDAGOGIES

In this section we move on from concrete accounts of teaching and learning to a more general level of discussion that corresponds to our intention to suggest commonalities and experiences that might be generalisable. We present five pedagogical heuristics: default pedagogy, creative approaches, creative skills, exploratory pedagogy and negotiated pedagogy. None of them, of course, exists outside its idealised form – they are ‘types’ not examples. Nevertheless, we think they can serve a useful purpose. The languages currently available to teachers to analyse, discuss and redesign their approaches to teaching and learning are somewhat limited. The more explicitly different approaches can be identified and articulated, the more possible it will be to discuss the limits, and the potential, of particular practices.<sup>xiv</sup>

The heuristics are designed to do two things – firstly to present the practice of teaching as it appears to classroom teachers and secondly to bring back together questions of content, process and assessment. One of the characteristics of much contemporary curriculum policy is that it separates out questions of knowledge, methods and assessment. This is unhelpful since they are inextricably related in the classroom in the material practices of learning and teaching, and since what happens in one affects the others. Getting alignment between the three ‘systems’ (Bernstein, 2000) is a key policy challenge and is now partially realised in the current notion of ‘assessment for learning’. This however still omits knowledge and thus the important debates about what it is actually important to know, that is, what is worth knowing. Schools that took up interdisciplinary approaches often focused on knowledge.

We have taken as key pedagogical points of reference:

- Expected outcomes – where they are derived from and how rigidly and finely they are taken up, whether there is room for variation and negotiation
- Experience – what counts as student experience, whether it is confined to what is in prior syllabus requirements or includes individual interests and peer, family, community, youth culture and popular knowledges
- Information – whether learning is understood as proceeding from the input of new information in formal and didactic means alone, or also proceeds via exploration and experience in which opportunities to acquire new information and create knowledge are scaffolded
- Reflection – whether there is an explicit place for teacher reflection on learning which may or may not also include students
- Assessment – whether assessment is seen as a separate activity or built into the reflection process

We present each heuristic in both visual and discursive form. We also indicate where our case study schools were focusing creative interventions.

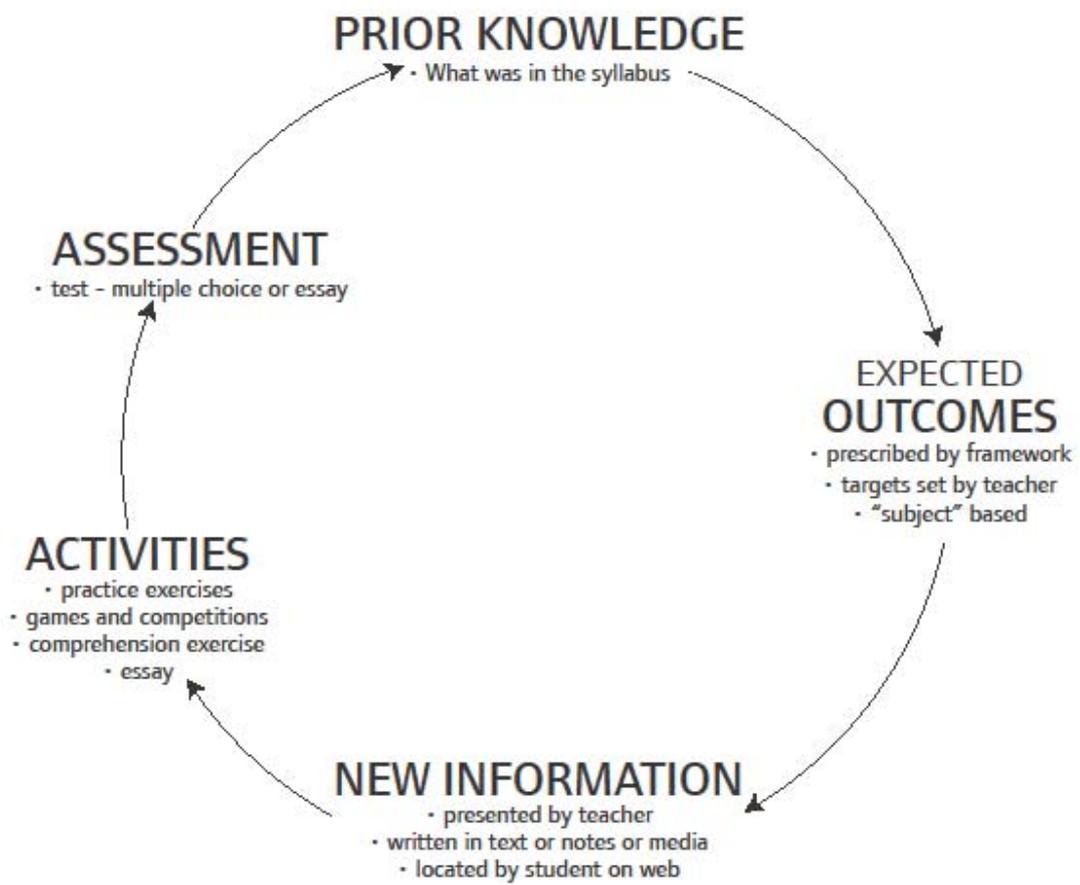
### (1) Default pedagogy

Although the default pedagogy is rarely found in its pure form, its traces are evident at many points in schools – including our case study schools. (This is hardly surprising when we consider the recent history of education policy and practice). It is the imaginary which CP wants to change. Default pedagogy is a transmission mode of teaching/learning in which:

1. Expected outcomes are prescribed in a syllabus and are the driver for lesson planning
2. Experience which matters is taken to be that in previous units, or years. Students' interests and current events may be harnessed as illustrations of the relevance of syllabus knowledge
3. Information is presented by the teacher to students as formal teaching, through text books and possibly via the internet
4. There is no formal reflection per se, rather students practise what has been presented via prescribed activities which may include exercises, mock tests, competitions and games
5. Assessment may be in the form of marks for exercises, essays and tests and may be used to ascribe a mark/level of progress against the prescribed outcomes.

We saw examples of this default pedagogy in some secondary schools that were under pressure to improve results, particularly at GCSE revision time (Plumtree College, Sycamore). But the vast majority of the case study schools had moved away from this towards versions of heuristic (2), next.

## DEFAULT PEDAGOGY



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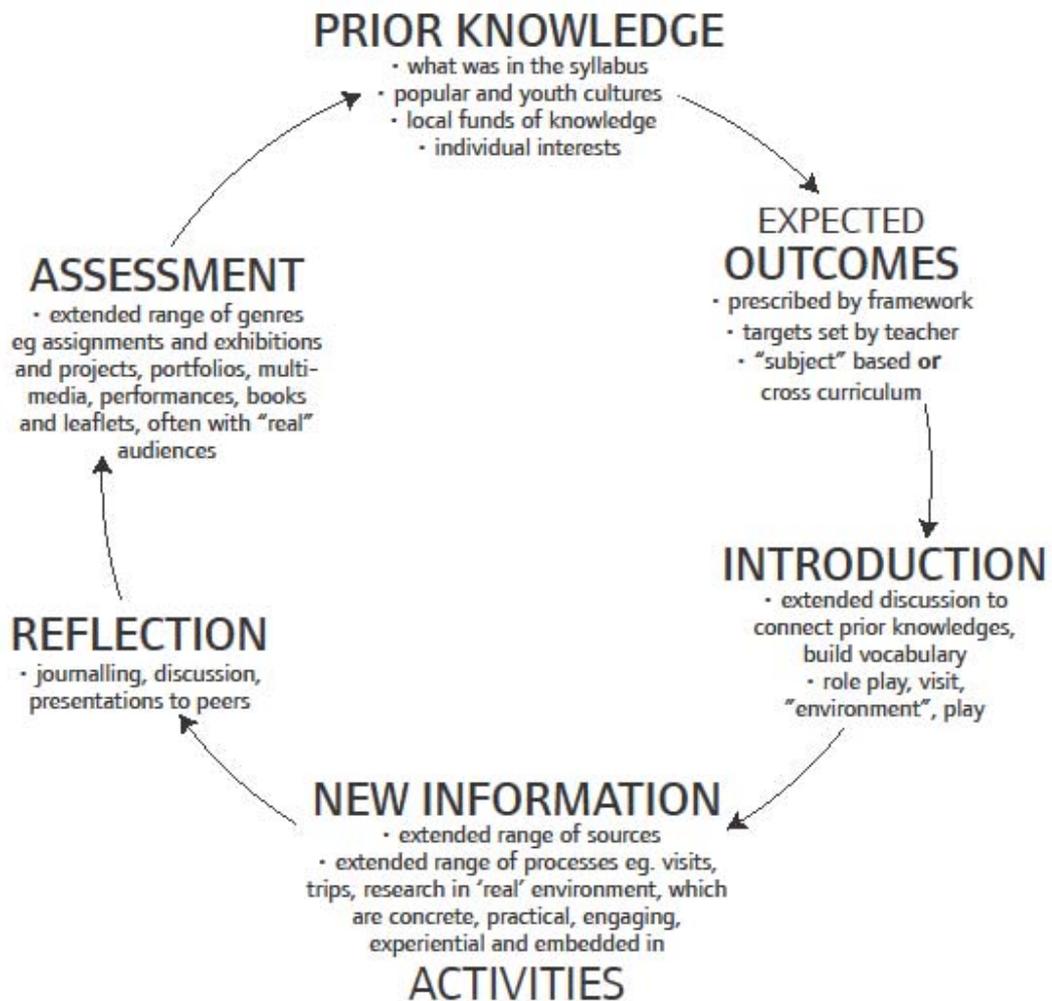
Figure 3: Default pedagogy

## (2) Creative approaches

This was the dominant approach in those case study and snapshot schools which focused directly on classroom learning (see table 3). CP practitioners and teachers worked together to redefine:

1. Expected outcomes – while the general curriculum outcomes were retained, these were detached from a prepackaged syllabus or text and were often widened to include additional areas which teacher and practitioner thought were relevant.
2. Experience – there was a much more generous definition of prior learning, with students' outside interests incorporated sometimes through structured 'pupil voice' activities. Some schools (e.g. Chestnut Secondary) focused strongly on youth cultures and/or on local regeneration projects (e.g. Rowan Nursery and Infants, Plumtree College, Chestnut Secondary). Mulberry Primary had worked hard on using drama approaches to connect with their multicultural community/ies. There was also a strong emphasis on experience as a mode of learning in its own right. Creative practitioners worked with teachers to design events and environments in which students could investigate a topic.
3. Where the focus was on experiential learning, there was often extensive work done on introducing the project. This might take the form of discussions, excursions, additional visiting practitioners, and/or performances. New information was introduced as part of the flow of the project, rather than as a discrete activity. Students were encouraged to access a range of information sources when to do so was appropriate for their learning. In some instances new information also included the deliberate introduction of information about creative activities in their own right, with students and teachers being encouraged to acquire new language in order to describe new experiences and explorations.
4. Reflection – CP encouraged the use of pre-project planning and in some sites this extended to thorough post-project reflection between practitioner and teacher. In only a few sites was this reflection used as a means to 'diagnose' what might happen next in students' learning; in 'Reggio'-influenced sites (e.g. Mimosa Nursery, Rowan Nursery and Infants) such pedagogic reflection was however part and parcel of the way teaching/learning was approached. These also were the sites where students were encouraged to reflect on their own learning on a regular basis.
5. Assessment – we did see some instances where teachers had adopted new forms of assessment (e.g. projects in Hazel Primary, portfolios in Elm Primary) but in general, teachers focused on the expected curriculum outcomes and saw what might be called other 'softer outcomes', which they also valued highly, as difficult to describe and assess.

## CREATIVE APPROACHES



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Figure 4: Creative approaches

There was no doubt that students were often highly engaged when creative approaches were used within a mandated framework. It was something that teachers sometimes found a little threatening at first (Elm Primary, Sycamore) but many were quickly convinced that the use of creative approaches was a useful addition to their pedagogical repertoires.

We noted in our interim report that there appeared to be a lack of creativity in snapshot schools when it came to assessment, and this held true in the case study schools. There were more interesting assessment practices in early childhood case sites where there was no division between the formal and informal curriculum and between curricular and extra curricular activities; staff here were focused on recording the multiple learnings demonstrated in one activity by keeping running records of progress. In primary and secondary sites teachers often appeared to be held back by the lack of alternative assessment examples and a rich assessment-specific language, even if students kept journals and produced significant project work. They were not generally engaged in investigating how existing assessment frames could assist them to approach what are commonly called 'soft outcomes', aspects of which do already appear in arts, vocational, citizenship and social education frames. Creative practitioners do not have skills in these areas and it is not surprising that there was less activity in this aspect of 'creative approaches'.

One of the trends most apparent in the case study primary schools, and in the first year of the secondary schools, was the return to a thematised approach to teaching and/or some form of curriculum integration. This provided longer and more carefully phased experiences for students, many of which involved out-of-class activities and the involvement of creative practitioners. It also afforded opportunities for teachers to talk and in secondary schools this was often one of the few times that teachers talked across subject departments about teaching and learning. These shifts did sometimes also require conversations about students' interests, as well as about what knowledge was important. Very few teachers that we interviewed however understood the differences between a multidisciplinary curriculum in which separate subjects are organised around a common theme, and an interdisciplinary curriculum where planning begins with the central theme and proceeds through identifying the big ideas and central concepts and skills without regard in the first instance to subjects (Beane, 1997). Similarly few understood the difference between asking about children's interests and their concerns (Rowan and Mulberry Primary were notable exceptions to this) (Brown & Saltman, 2005) and the very substantive differences this might make in the depth of knowledge and challenge that the two might produce.

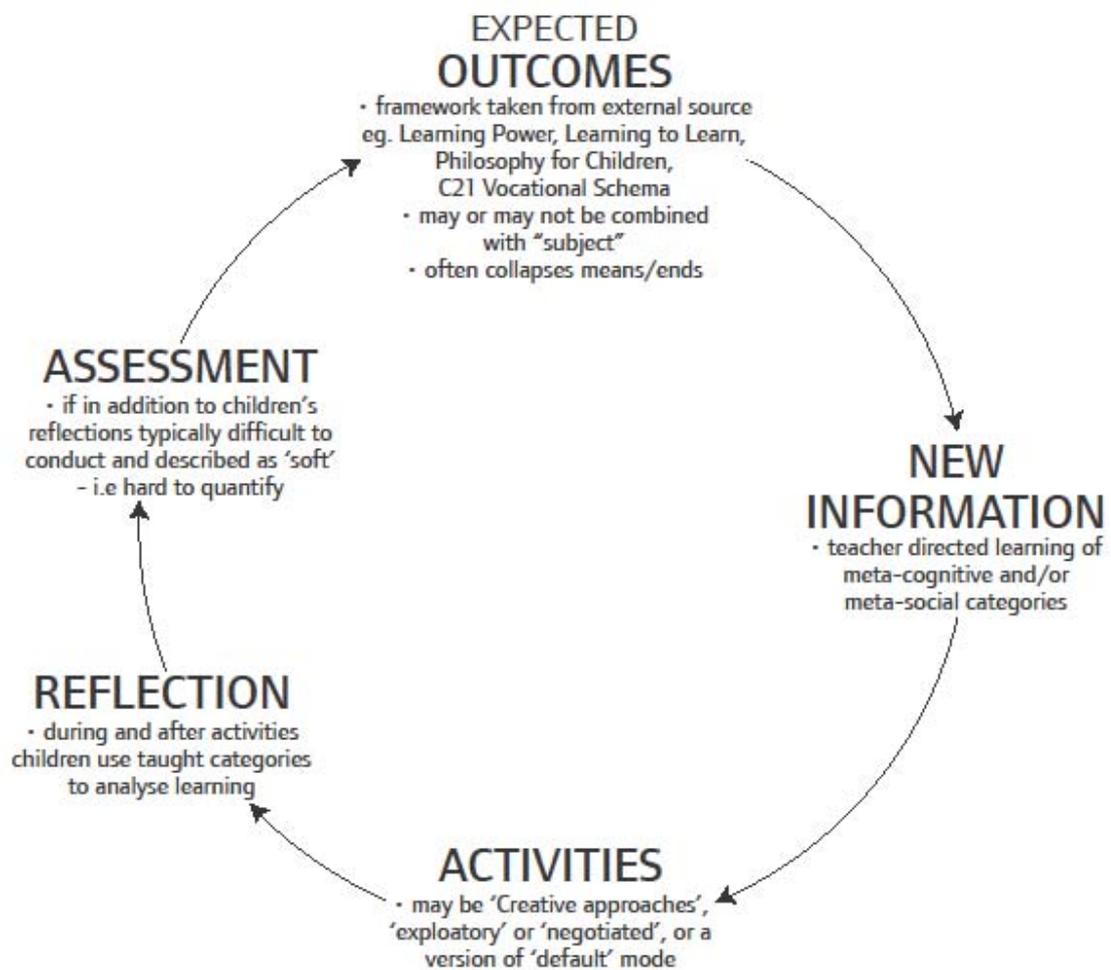
### **(3) Creative skills**

Some schools in the study, including one in the snapshot phase (Elder), had decided to implement a specific process-oriented curriculum which focused on creative thinking. This was described as 'skills' which could be taught through specific exercises. The rationale for a creative skills approach was sometimes that the new economy needed young people to leave school with a new way of behaving and thinking and sometimes that creative thinking would help children to acquire mandated learning more successfully. There are a number of commercial enterprises offering packages of 'creative skills' curriculum and these were used to generate most of the materials for these specific courses. One primary school in the snapshot data had introduced Philosophy for Children; in contrast a handful in the snapshot

phase had worked on 'creative thinking' skills as a discrete sequence of lessons. Creative skills courses shared some common characteristics:

1. Expected outcomes were derived from externally developed schema or in-house or with the support of external agencies (for example, Sycamore Comprehensive had an extensive network of businesses who were consulted).
2. Experience – students were considered to have little prior expertise, but experience in the course was expected to 'transfer' to other areas of the curriculum and to future vocational and life destinations
3. Information about skills was delivered in much the same as in any other curriculum. Students then had to practise them.
4. Reflection – students were sometimes encouraged to reflect on their experiences in order to improve
5. Assessment of skills was via performance and the students' facility with the specific language and rationale attached to the course.

## CREATIVE “SKILLS”



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Figure 5: Creative skills

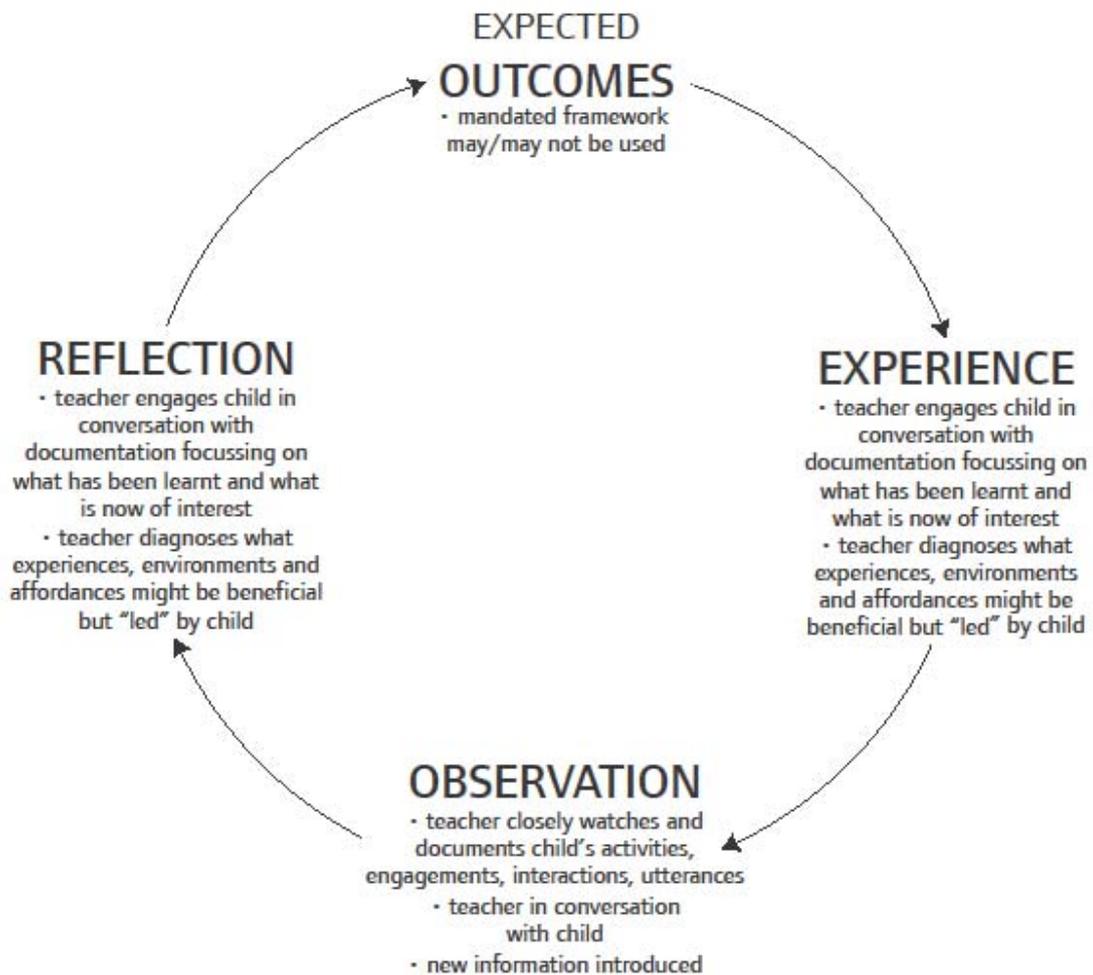
The introduction of the creative skills curriculum experienced some hiccups at Sycamore; a student-led evaluation showed that most of the school community believed that too much time was devoted to it, and some teachers were sceptical of its value. The senior leadership team was however firmly convinced of its worth and importance, and during the period of our research had persisted in working to consolidate it in Year 7. We also remain sceptical of this approach. Our own reading of this CP programme, research literatures and in other research projects suggests that skills are context specific and thus not readily transferable; they need content to which they can be added as process<sup>xv</sup> and that such initiatives often fail to enthuse students and their parents.

#### **(4) Exploratory pedagogy**

This was dominant practice in early childhood settings in our case studies. It had the following features:

1. Expected outcomes were broadly derived from curriculum documents but were highly amenable to development and variation
2. Experience - Children's prior experiences were seen as the basis of learning and the understandings of prior learning included all of the child's contexts in their life and school worlds. Learning was seen to proceed via experience. There was a strong emphasis on open-ended activities through which children could make choices about what activities they undertook. These activities were carefully planned and developed in part as a result of diagnosis of where each child sat in relation to their individual development, needs, interests and the mandated learning framework. Experiences included extensive outdoor activities, excursions, and activities unfamiliar to the child.
3. Information was gained through exploration and experience in which opportunities to acquire new information were scaffolded.
4. Reflection – time was devoted regularly to teacher reflection on learning and this often included students and in some instances parents. Assessment was thus integral to and inseparable from the reflection process.

## EXPLORATORY PEDAGOGY



[creativeschoolchange.org.uk/](http://creativeschoolchange.org.uk/)

Figure 6: Exploratory pedagogy

There were elements of this approach used in primary schools where exploratory environments and activities were presented as the introduction phase of a project (e.g. Mulberry Primary). However none of the primary schools we investigated had adopted this as a whole school approach, although some were in the process of thinking how exploratory pedagogies practised in their early years classes might inform developments in later years (e.g. Elm Primary).

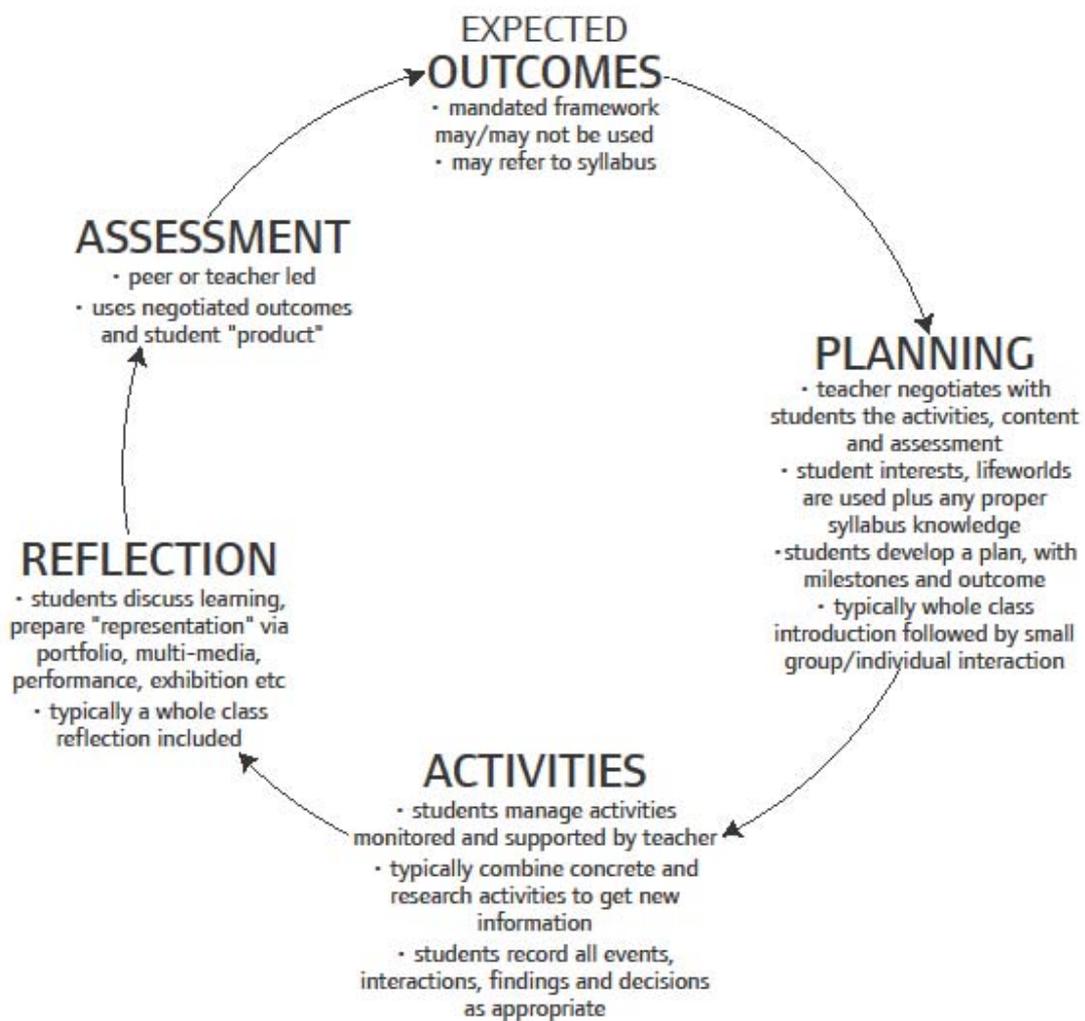
### **(5) Negotiated pedagogy<sup>xvi</sup>**

We did not see negotiated pedagogies per se in any schools as a whole school approach, although some teachers in some locations did adopt this kind of approach as a more one-off or occasional activity<sup>xvii</sup>. We are aware that it is a pedagogy which is used in some senior school arts subjects and in some International Baccalaureate programmes. We include it here because it is a possible strategy for schools genuinely committed to extending students' participation in curriculum decision-making. Negotiation is not the same as asking students how they learn; it is a consistent approach which involves students in the process of planning a sequence of learning activities and in the assessment of learning, viz:

1. Expected outcomes are derived from broad curriculum frameworks. Students and teachers discuss expected outcomes (often called goals) and develop a plan for how they will be achieved and what will demonstrate success. The plan is generally in the form of a project or rich task. Students work separately or together in work groups.
2. Experience – students are able to introduce their own interests and knowledges as long as they will support acquisition of mandated outcomes
3. Finding new information is built into the project plan as and when necessary to achieve the goals
4. Reflection – both students and teachers keep extensive records of the progress of the project which are discussed in regular meetings. Students are expected to present reflections on the process of project as part of the work.
5. Assessment is generally via a portfolio which may be presented to a range of internal and external assessors. Assessment is based on demonstrated achievement of the expected outcomes specified in the project goals.

It is important to note that negotiation focuses strongly on process and assessment as well as content, and has been a pedagogical approach used in Australia and North America for some considerable time (Boomer, 1982; Boomer, Lester, Onore, & Cook, 1992; Thomson, 2007b).

## NEGOTIATED PEDAGOGY



[creativeschoolchange.org.uk/](http://creativeschoolchange.org.uk/)

Figure 7: Negotiated pedagogy

## **Summary**

We now add a pedagogical descriptor to the summary we made in the previous section. This allows a cumulative appreciation of what was happening in case study schools. (We focus here on aspects of the creativity agenda, rather than on the effects of default pedagogy.)

School	Beginning points	Creative approaches	Affiliation	Pedagogical approach
<b>Chestnut Secondary</b> Secondary comprehensive, not long out of special measures. Aspiring to be specialist performing arts	Changing what counts as learning. Changing the school culture. Moved to focus on directly on creative learning at a mid point	Linking creative practices to youth culture and creative industries	Symbolic	Creative approaches predominantly in extra curricular areas, some vocationally oriented mainstream
<b>Elm Primary</b> Small, rural, middle class, 'good school'. Expanding from junior to primary, new buildings.	Changing the way pupils learn, changing the way learning is organised. Later, took up assessment issues.	Focus on teachers understanding of creativity.	Symbolic moving to substantive but then opted out	Creative approaches in mainstream curriculum
<b>Hazel Primary</b> Successful inner-city school, now part of federation.	Changing the way pupils learn, changing the way learning is organised	Collaborative performances	Substantive	Creative approaches in extra and mainstream curricula
<b>Juniper Primary</b> Inner city school, socially mixed intake.	Changing the way pupils learn	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time	Symbolic moving back to affiliative	Creative approaches in aspects of the mainstream curriculum.
<b>Mimosa Nursery</b> Located in high poverty suburban estate in city	Changing the way learning is assessed. Changing what counts as learning, changing who teaches	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time; focus on teachers' understandings of creativity	Substantive	Exploratory pedagogy combined with creative approaches
<b>Mulberry Primary</b> Medium sized primary with 99% EAL and in deprived urban locality	Changing the ways pupils learn	Struggled to find a way to engage but did focus on developing teachers' understandings of creativity as teaching method	Unable to affiliate	Creative approaches in extra and mainstream curricula
<b>Oak Tree Primary</b> Large multicultural primary	Changing school organisation; changing the school culture	Focus on teachers' understanding of creativity	Substantive	Creative approaches primarily to learning environments and extra curricular activity
<b>Plumtree College</b> Secondary comprehensive serving deprived estate plus older more established middle class community Poor building stock	Changing school culture, changing the way pupils learn	Big collaborative productions	Affiliative but opted out	Creative approaches in extra curricular activities and gifted and talented enhancement
<b>Rowan Nursery and Infant</b> Small school in high poverty suburban estate	Changing the way pupils learn, changing what counts as learning, changing who teaches	Employing artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods	Substantive	Exploratory, negotiated and creative approaches

<p><b>Silver Birch High</b> Catholic secondary school (non-grammar) in area with selective secondary system Specialist Arts College.</p>	Changing school culture	Multiple projects focusing on teachers' understanding of possibilities opened up by creative approaches	Symbolic	Creative approaches predominantly but not exclusively in extra curricular activities
<p><b>Sycamore Comprehensive</b> Medium size specialist business and enterprise college Located in middle class area but serving nearby estate. Comprehensive in grammar school system.</p>	Changing the way learning is organised, changing what counts as learning and changing school culture	Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism	Affiliative	Creative skills, creative approaches in extra curricular and vocational specialism
<p><b>Alder College</b> Highly innovative secondary school in new build serving deprived rural locality</p>	Focus on blurring disciplinary boundaries, changing school culture and organisation	Big performances	Affiliated CP to its own agenda	Creative approaches in extra and mainstream curricula
<p><b>Blackthorn Federation</b> Federation of three schools from 2006 on a new purpose built PFI funded site in an area of mixed housing in a town</p>	Blurring disciplinary boundaries, changing school culture, changing school organisation	Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism	Affiliative	Pedagogies varied across sites: special school used exploratory pedagogies and creative approaches, primary and secondary used creative approaches but secondary primarily in extra curricular activities

**Table 7: Summary of vernacular changes plus pedagogies**

## Chapter 4: PARTICIPATION IN SCHOOL DECISION MAKING

This is the first of two sections which focus specifically on the processes of school change. Here we address how schools chose to involve students, parents and the wider community. The next section examines the kinds of leadership and management practices that variously allowed staff to take initiatives and decisions directed towards creative school change.

### Student participation

At the interim stage of our research, we reported that, in the schools where significant change was evident, students were actively involved in everyday classroom practices and sometimes in decision-making. In all of the case study schools, staff referred to the importance of student voice and participation. Voice was often explicitly linked to definitions of creativity in education:

*I'm not talking about creativity as turning out artists and actors and musicians. I'm talking about children leaving the school who ask questions and who are thoughtful and who have had those opportunities through creative activities to be independent and make decisions for themselves, because this is all part of the process. (HT, Hazel Primary)*

Teachers thought that creative arts activities offered opportunities to build students' confidence in speaking out:

*The shyness is not there and they are not afraid of expressing themselves. (Teacher, Mulberry Primary)*

*It makes them feel more confident and that their opinions are valued and that they are valued as a person and they don't always feel that in the classroom. (Teacher, Mulberry Primary)*

There was some evidence of ambivalence and concerns amongst class teachers about a link between 'noise' and loss of control:

*I would say there is a sense of chaos but I think we've become accustomed to it. Our class is quite loud because of the building going on but it's quite exciting for them ...there is an air of expectation. The playground has been adapted and we've got loads of new toys but quite a few have already been broken so we've had to talk about their responsibility.... I couldn't say that an increase in work with Creative Partnerships has produced a happier school but I would love to say that. I've heard that ten years ago the kids ruled the school and the behaviour wasn't as good as when I came or what it is now, and I'd love to say that was due to offering creative opportunities. (Teacher, Juniper Primary)*

However, the overwhelming majority of staff and students interviewed shared very positive views about student voice and engagement:

*What I like about this school is that although it might present as a bit of a shambles, if you unpick it - I walk round a lot and I'm constantly seeing*

*what's going on and I can tell you what's what in every classroom. Very rarely is it that our children aren't doing something constructive.* (HT, Elm Primary)

[How the school has improved] *The [teachers] speak to you on the same level and they don't talk down to you like you're a child; they kind of look at you as a young adult.* (Student, Plumtree College)

Several of the schools had set out to develop something more ambitious than the traditional School Council which tended to be characterised as 'about toilets and uniforms and that type of thing' (Teacher, Sycamore). Some schools had established a variety of consultative or representative groups with different agendas and responsibilities, for example:

*We've got various councils within the school: we've got our [indecipherable] group which meets about the environment; we've got our young consultants who are, like, half drama and Creative Partnerships and then we've got our student council which deals with other things. It's quite good and they function quite well and it gives the children a chance to have their say.* (HT, Mulberry Primary).

Oak Tree Primary primary school had developed a 'Think Tank' consisting of both staff and pupils whose remit was to consider fundamental issues of curriculum and organisation in the school. The head and some of the staff considered the Think Tank 'an incredibly powerful tool for moving the school on':

*Before I came there was a school council in operation and there were reps for various things but I would say that this [the Think Tank] has had a big impact on whole school pupil voice because the school council was obviously just a small group of children. This though has actually had impact on the whole school because every pupil can have a say in how their classroom looks... we used the model to effect change in other areas of school and it has moved into curriculum areas as well and we've had pupil voice groups to establish issues in school. So it's had a knock-on effect.* (HT, Oak Tree Primary)

Some schools did manage to use their Councils in ways that were very representative. At Elm Primary the School Council was based on 'circle time' class meetings. Each class had two representatives who attended a monthly council meeting and they brought with them the class meeting book in which records of class discussion were kept. Council meetings consisted of careful reading of these books to elicit items for decision and items from one class which needed to go back to all classes for discussion. The headteacher regularly placed items of school policy on the agenda for classes to discuss and when students made recommendations these were acted on. The headteacher also collected class meeting books each month to read through them and she made individual comments back to each class. The Council was supported by a teaching assistant who also provided training in meeting procedures, minute taking and the like in induction and ongoing sessions.

At Oak Tree Primary, setting for literacy and numeracy had been abolished because the pupils had been allowed a greater say in the organisation of learning:

*I think the big difference in terms of the pupil voice is that they've had their survey and their ideas were expressed and listened to. So we abolished setting ... The children didn't want to move around. They wanted to stay in*

*their own place with their own desks and they wanted to belong. So senior management took that on board and decided that, as from September last year, we would abolish setting ... And that was something that the staff were quite reluctant to take on board, so the pupil voice was very strong. (Teacher, Oak Tree Primary)*

Plumtree College had also developed a commitment to using the school's student voice forum as a research tool to ensure that it was 'much more focused on teaching and learning.' This school had experimented with students observing and analysing a sample of lessons and reporting back to the staff in an inservice training session. The emphasis on learning styles coincided with the headteacher's own focus:

*[the staff] had done learning styles but when I walked around the classrooms there was absolutely no evidence that they had done learning styles. And, yes, they'd done an inset session and they'd done that in a perfunctory way but they hadn't engaged it or used it. But now they are really engaged and they will listen to the students. And they've seen what the students have been doing. And when they are looking for the three levels of outcomes for the students, they are much more able now to be thinking through the process of how they can create those outcomes through different learning styles. So it is beginning to come from the work that Creative Partnerships has done. (HT, Plumtree College)*

This had led to some difficulties, as the students and teachers acknowledged:

*S1: I told my teacher. I told her that I had chosen her and she wasn't happy about it.*

*T: The teachers need to be happy with the idea or it won't work. There was a time during the [observation] period where we -*

*S2: We sort of annoyed the teachers.*

*S1: We were making some notes in lessons.*

*S2: That was a mistake.*

*S1: Some of us got taken away.*

*R: Had you mentioned this in the staff room?*

*T: I told everybody on the staff that [the student group] might be doing some observations of lessons and they would make it clear that was happening and if anybody had any problems with that then they should let me know...And I think that one of the students saying that they were spying on them didn't help matters. But we learnt from that. We realised that we had to be careful how we do this; we can't just be like a bull in a china shop. (Plumtree College)*

The mishandling of the student research project had resulted in the collapse of the student teaching and learning groups ('this year they have been completely ineffectual due to lack of volunteers'). This led one of the core CP teachers to focus on using the arts to develop voice and participation, a parallel strategy that had

already been attempted in the school through the making of a film and material for broadcasting:

*To be honest I'm pinning more hope on the films and the broadcasting as a way of developing student voice and student research. I'm not saying that [the observation project] is finished... (Teacher, Plumtree College).*

This however did not come about. Plumtree students also expressed concern about the apparent lack of response to the suggestions they made during an initial students' forum. No-one had reported back to the students that student voice had been written into the school improvement plan but only in relation to the observation of staff and that responsibility for implementation had shifted to the senior staff member in charge of strategies for meeting performance targets.

Several schools had explicitly used film and photography work, sometimes with blogs as well, to develop and perform student voice in ways that created an audience and occasions for acknowledgement and response. The films made by Plumtree College students functioned in this way to promote discussion with staff ('It was very nice because you were on the same level as the teachers'); a 'Visual Diaries' project at Silver Birch High set out to reveal the daily life of the school from as many viewpoints as possible over a three day period. Photography was also used to support students in having a voice in local politics:

*There is a lot of photography work that was also done, where the [students] went out into the community and they reported back and then they actually displayed some of that work. A lot of that tied in with local council planning and there was a connection there as well so they were listening to what our students were saying through their photographs and through the art work that they produced. (Teacher, Plumtree College)*

The different art forms were understood as helping children and young people articulate ideas and opinions in new ways, both through the form itself and in their spoken language more generally:

*At one stage we had counsellors in the school and the artists had only been in here for three weeks and we were able to say goodbye to the counsellors and that we didn't need them anymore. It wasn't that the problems that the children had had gone away, it was just that they were able to deal with them in a different way. Maybe it was the physical activity that the children did with the artists but it actually helped them to speak properly. (Headteacher, Rowan Nursery and Infants School)*

*The way that I find that drama is really good, is in the way that it can bring situations into real life and it makes the children become the characters. (Teacher, Hazel Primary)*

This heightened sense of the communicative potential of the different art forms was evident in several teachers' responses. For example:

*When I was at school drama was acting, but now drama is not just acting it goes deeper than that. (Teacher, Mulberry Primary).*

This sense of the depth and importance of what might be expressed through CP instigated activities resonated with many of the teachers in our sample. Some were

interested in the 'consumer' voices of their students (Bragg, 2007) – 'market research' from the consumers of the system about, for example, their preferred types of lessons; but many were more interested in eliciting new and different voices. In Cedar special school in the snapshot sample, for example, the children and staff co-constructed narratives in a series of interactive drama sessions facilitated by a theatre company of adults with learning difficulties. The sessions were aimed at eliciting verbal or physical responses from students who had previously found group work impossible or had difficulty in understanding other people's feelings or expressions. Gains that might have seemed small for other individuals were understood as tremendous successes for some of the participants: a smile and the ability to express enjoyment were seen as highly significant developments in self-expression for particular children. The key objective was to find a 'voice' in its own right, rather than the use of voice as a means of expressing a particular agenda.

These sessions had a profound impact on both the staff and the students. Cedar's CP Co-ordinator spoke emotionally about the experience:

*We have removed the paraphernalia of failure. You walk into a classroom: there is a piece of paper; there is a pen; there is a seat where you have to put the children; there is your circle; there are your things – all of which they have failed at in the past. So we took that away from them.*

This sense of inclusiveness and of barriers being removed also extended to students struggling to learn English:

*[Drama] includes everyone. The children who have English as an additional language, it gives them an opportunity to express - if you ask them to write something, sometimes they don't have the understanding whereas if they act it out they don't feel threatened because everyone is playing a part. They don't feel that they are doing anything wrong because there is no right or wrong in drama. (Teacher, Mulberry Primary)*

Schools were interested in eliciting heritage stories, cultural history and especially tales of migration to the locality: Hazel Primary created an opera around these diverse voices; Mulberry Primary ran workshops to encourage parents to contribute to the curriculum:

*...parents were coming in and doing these workshops about their experiences in Bosnia and in India and they were bringing that into drama and they were saying that this is a really useful tool for learning. (HT, Mulberry Primary)*

In Mulberry, this concern to listen to the authentic experiences of the students extended to eliciting more accounts of everyday racism:

*We have to fill in racist incidents forms and we have to monitor them. And I got really concerned that we were not having any racist incidents because, for me, I know that however good you are or whatever you do, racism is endemic and it's there. And it's how you deal with it as a school. So we did a big drive on that ...and the racist incidents increased, and now they are decreasing - but that's what we wanted to happen. We wanted to give our children the confidence to report the incidents. (HT, Mulberry Primary)*

This led the school to establish a peer mediation scheme:

*The [peer mediators] are being taught skills to actually defuse situations in the playground, that could be either racist or bullying, by negotiation. In fact, all those skills that they learn in drama. (HT, Mulberry Primary)*

*We help others that have conflict or a disagreement or argument. We are, like, peace makers. (Student peer mediator, Mulberry Primary).*

The 'voice' work was also about creating alternative discourses: of conflict resolution in the case of the peer mediators, of negotiation and of agreeing to differ.

*We had some teachers come in and one of the things that they said was that they could just see that the children were used to this way of working. It was just the way that the children go into groups and worked with each other so well. They were able to negotiate without squabbling. (Teacher, Mulberry Primary)*

Through their children, the schools explicated their philosophy and day to day practice to parents:

*Parents used to say: why do you never tell us what you are doing with the children? I said that we do and we send home a little book. 'Oh, I never read that!' So we now have it on a sheet of paper which is coloured and cost us a lot of money but we explain it all to the children and hopefully the children will tell their parents. Because it's a sheet of A4 it can easily be read and so the parents and the children can go through it together and see how things link up. (DHT, Hazel Primary)*

At Mulberry School, the singing lessons were re-presented to the children and their parents as part of a 'multi-sensory learning programme':

*T: I think that, over the years, we've expanded the children's and the community's knowledge of what creativity is. Because if you came to our school ten years ago, when I first started, and if you sang they would put their fingers in their ears.*

*I: Because they weren't allowed to listen to it?*

*T: Yes...It's taken a lot of perseverance to explain that we are not disrespecting any religion but it is a part of a multi-sensory learning programme that children need to be involved in.*

Within a different paradigm of creativity, students at Chestnut Secondary school were encouraged to immerse themselves in the language of sales so they could learn how to 'talk the talk' and promote both themselves and the school:

*So our kids then had a six weeks shadowing programme... where they got immersed in all of the features and benefits, all of the meeting and greeting techniques. It's not a coincidence that both of those have now got part-time jobs in retail before they go to college. They learnt to talk the talk, we took*

*them out, kitted them out from Marks and Sparks, bought them the outfits, we had an open weekend here for families...(CA, Chestnut Secondary)*

Managing the media through a flow of good news and developing effective promotional language were central to the vocational and school improvement agendas that dominated the schools.

*...We explored the idea of friendship and they went up to X University as part of their media studies to make short films with the students there, and that was our first project... we showcased that when it was finished because one thing that we've learnt is that you have to showcase every project when it is finished and celebrate the work.... Pupils are now aware that we are nationally recognised. (Teacher, Chestnut Secondary)*

*I make no apology about promoting the successes of our school. I use the media; I try and get stuff in the press because it's another way of getting information out into the local community. They read their newspapers and they see their local school and their kids in a very positive light. (HT, Sycamore)*

In lessons, this emphasis on developing voice was often observable. Sometimes this took the form of particular curriculum initiatives, such as a whole school approach to drama pedagogies, or, in Elder Tree, one of the snapshot schools, to philosophical inquiry. In both of these cases the pedagogies tended to be formal and participative; conventions and rules were taught so that voice was developed within a framework which supported and valued individual contributions and built collective conversation or drama.

The philosophy lessons required the students to learn rules of acknowledgement and to expect visible signs of being listened to.

*It would carry on for a bit because someone might agree or disagree with them and if they disagreed they would say something else but if they agreed then they could, like, follow on from it. (Student, Elder Tree)*

The school's head teacher understood the philosophy project, in part, as a means of developing critical individual voices whilst also helping the children to get along with one another:

*I felt philosophy would actually give our children a structure for disagreeing and we could have a structure which enables them to have a view... If you speak to the teachers they will say that it has had a real impact and we can see it now in the playground and in the lessons. What we are doing is giving them a form of words so that they've got a way of speaking without it becoming a personal issue. It's alright to disagree with somebody. (HT, Elder Tree)*

The most formal of the individually negotiated curriculum initiatives we observed was at Rowan nursery and infant school where the children regularly negotiated their own activities for a part of the week. They identified what they thought they would learn and what would be needed to organise the work successfully.

*It's not just a choosing day; it's a day when the children plan and they plan it together with the teacher and it's written down as a plan and it's where the children say what they want to do and what they think they are going to learn from that. So if they want to bake they will have to say exactly what they think they are going to get from that. (Teacher, Rowan Nursery and Infants)*

In several of the schools there was also an explicit focus on teacher voice and participation. Silver Birch High employed an actor in residence to develop the performance elements of teachers' work and to try out new, collaborative pedagogic ideas. On a more mundane level, teachers appreciated commitment to their own voice being translated into being given time in the day to discuss plans and to jointly evaluate:

*The best evaluation tool that we use in our school is talk and discussion. Actually sitting down and talking together and giving people the opportunity to come out of what they are doing and not talking about it at five o'clock at night but giving them some time during the day and evaluate what works well – sort of more or less immediately. (HT, Mulberry Primary)*

Teachers who participated in the primary school Think Tank felt that it allowed them to cross disciplinary boundaries and actively debate whole school issues and strategies:

*I would say that the main voice for us in the school was through what we call Curriculum Team – so the staff were sorted by their sort of interests and expertise in numeracy or literacy, history and geography and so on and that was the main opportunity for people to have a voice. But then what you found was that there was somebody who was paid to lead the team and then other people in the team didn't have that much of a voice and their role was more to help out. So when we had the Think Tank that was the first real opportunity for staff like myself to have a voice in the school. In fact this was empowered by senior management to make decisions. (Teacher, Oak Tree Primary)*

## Summary

Flutter and Rudduck (2004) adapted Hart's (1997) 'ladder of participation', a model for both describing and encouraging differing levels of involvement offered to students. The 'ladder of participation' takes the form of a scale, numbered from zero to four, with increasing levels of participation. Students are used as a source of data at level 1, with no direct involvement in the discussion of findings. At level 2, there is some involvement of the students in decision making. Higher up the ladder, at levels 3 and 4, students work more actively as participants and co-researchers in issues which affect them in school. At level 4, there is joint initiation of inquiry between teachers and students, with students taking an active role in decision making in the light of data gathered. We saw examples of 'voice' activities at all these rungs of engagement.

We also witnessed projects for which the ladder of participation, with its focus on pupils participating in a school based agenda as consultants or researchers on school improvement issues, proved an inadequate model. In those examples, individual expression was sometimes encouraged as part of an artistic or philosophical model of

democratic participation which placed the student, but also sometimes the teacher, at the centre of the school experience.

School	Type of student voice	Main activities
Oak Tree Primary Plumtree College	Consumer	Surveys Focus groups
Mulberry Primary Hazel Primary Plumtree College Alder College Mimosa Nursery Rowan Nursery and Infants Mulberry Primary	Self expression/identity building	Speaking up in & out of class  Drama
Mulberry Primary Plumtree College Elm Primary Oak Tree Primary Sycamore Comprehensive Mulberry Primary	Political <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Campaigning</li> <li>o Representative</li> <li>o Delegated</li> </ul>	Issue groups, on environmentalism Photos School council Think Tank School Council
Plumtree College	Argument	Broadcast to staff based on student research
Juniper Primary Elm Primary Rowan Nursery and Infants Hazel Primary Mulberry Primary	Therapeutic	Being engaged and busy, especially in the arts  Drama
Mulberry Primary Plumtree College	Negotiation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Peer mediation</li> <li>o Staff/student</li> </ul>	Peer mediation schemes Student made film for staff audience
Rowan Nursery and Infants Juniper Primary Silver Birch High	Aesthetic	Arts criticism and interpretation
Hazel Primary Mulberry Primary Mulberry Primary	Cultural <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Heritage</li> <li>o Knowledge</li> </ul>	Story-telling, drama & opera build on community stories  Walking to music, exploration of diverse literatures & art forms
Oak Tree Primary Plumtree College Mulberry Primary Rowan Nursery and Infants Rowan Nursery and Infants	Academic	Think Tank (eg on literacy) Student research (eg lesson observation & analysis) Collaborative evaluation through discussion  Negotiated curriculum
Hazel Primary Plumtree College	Dialogic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>o Family</li> <li>o Community</li> </ul>	Child responsibility for explaining sheet of info to parents Blogs
Silver Birch High Chestnut Secondary Sycamore Comprehensive	Promotional	Visual diaries, media production
Chestnut Secondary Sycamore Comprehensive	Commercial	Shadowing, work experience, sponsorship

**Table 8: Student voice and participation**

## Parents and community

All the case study schools wanted to bring parents and 'the community' into the framework of their creative practice. Some emphasised that this was an extension of a long-standing commitment, with its origins pre-dating any involvement with CP. Mulberry Primary, for instance, had an 'open door policy, and the parents can come in and see us whenever they like' (Home Liaison Tutor); staff at Rowan Nursery and Infants had 'long-term' experience at the school, with a record of 'service to the community' (Rowan Headteacher). Several schools, also, had developed ways of engaging with parents outside the framework of creative practice, through other government initiatives such as Sure Start.

It does seem to be the case, however, that engagement with CP stimulated case study schools to develop further their relations with parents and with the community, in ways that were often (if not always) distinct from previous practice. It is possible, thus, to speak of a 'CP' effect on schools' relationships with parents and with the community, even if this effect consists sometimes as much of a new sense of the complexity of the issues involved, as of a claim to have accomplished particular objectives. In this section, we analyse data from interviews with teachers and headteachers to explore the terms in which these issues were discussed.

It is helpful to distinguish first between the different uses to which 'parents' and 'the community' were put. All schools referred to the 'community', for instance, and regarded it as a significant influence on learners. But the way that schools evaluated their particular communities differed considerably from school to school.

One school recognised that a consequence of its creativity strategy had been the winning of a positional advantage in an educational market in which middle-class parents were an important force:

*We've stuck to our guns over creativity and it's proved very successful for us and our school and the number of parents who want their children to come here because they've heard so much about us. Word gets round and we've had the most ever applicants for our Reception. We had a hundred and sixty applicants for sixty places. And it's because people hear what we are doing and we are proud of it and I think it shows. (HT, Hazel Primary)*

This reading of the local community and its response to creative practice was confirmed by a second interviewee:

*Parents love it. They come in and they are amazed and we get very positive feedback. I think it is probably the middle class parents who give you that feedback and I think that is just the nature of our environment. They seem to be the parents who are more arty and more involved with the arts. (Teacher, Hazel Primary).*

For the most part, though, schools saw their creative practice against a background of poverty and unemployment:

*We are now in our third generation of unemployment. It was a thriving community right up until the seventies and we had three coal mines; we had the potteries; we had the River L with all the dye works and what not providing dyed cloth for the lace industry and then within a ten year period*

*almost all that went. But, at the same time, areas like M – which they considered to be slum areas – were demolished and they built new estates here and one of the difficulties was that they invited the young families to come out to the new estates but the older families stayed behind so we had quite a period – I suppose, thirty years – where the younger families were unsupported by their extended family. . . The mental health problem is big here and I think it was only two years ago that we had the highest youth crime rate in Europe. (HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants)*

*It's quite often the barriers I referred to earlier will come from the previous generation, who perhaps came to this school or another school and didn't have a particularly positive experience, have also been victims of a pretty harsh recession that's clobbered all of the traditional industries that they might have previously thought soaked up people with less academic qualifications, and are now having to rethink. (CA, Chestnut Secondary).*

*We have students who come from very broken homes; very poor backgrounds and from areas where drugs and alcohol have had quite a damaging effect on the community. So we've got students who do not receive proper parenting; who are not allowed to achieve their potential certainly within their own homes. There is an ethos within the community where education is not one of the priorities. Certainly I would say that generally the aspirations of kids here is poor and you can have some very bright kids but they don't want to go anywhere in particular. (HT, Plumtree College)*

On the basis of such descriptions (which usually involve to a greater or lesser extent an interpretation and an evaluation of 'communities' and their problems and achievements), there can follow a conception of the role of the school as a force for 'regeneration', that works alongside other agencies and interests, which are thereby drawn into the 'community' within which the school is situated:

*When we knew that (local developer) had won the housing contract the Head and me, and the guy from the council, jumped in the car, went to their office and said, "You're coming onto our manor here. What are you going to give back to our community?" And they were brilliant, so we sat down with the chairman, the managing director and the construction director and said, "Look, if you're coming to Chestnut we really want to play," and they've been amazing... They began by sending in a team, so year 8 named the site, year 8 worked with their marketing team, and came up after a lot of research, they went into the history of it all, they talked with local people, they came up with Chestnut Park. A great big sign went up when it was mud saying, "In Partnership with Chestnut High School, XXX Homes have created Chestnut Park 114 family dwellings." So year 8 used to walk past feeling great about this. (CA, Chestnut Secondary).*

A similar interest, linking the regeneration of communities to the involvement of schools with major companies, was evident at another secondary school, Sycamore. It was much less evident in primary schools. Here, 'community' tended to denote a perspective on the cultural rather than the economic dimensions of local life. From this perspective the role of the school was to make connections between the culture of education and the cultures of localities so as to enhance children's learning. One striking example of such a project was at Oak Tree Primary:

*Then they (creative practitioners) looked at the front entrance of the school and this was quite an exciting project because you come in through the front entrance but actually it's quite difficult to find it. You can walk round and round the school thinking: how do I get in? And that was the question they were asking: how do you promote our school to the outside world and show the community what our school has to offer? And, again, we looked at all the pathways around the entrance and we have our schools ... behind railings and one of the questions they asked was: what does that say about your school? Is your school wealthy and are you saying that? ... So (creative practitioners) then came up with this idea that they would redesign the front of the school: they'll take down the entrance area and they'll develop a feature on the side of the school which will present a very positive image and we'll have a standing area in it which will be a much more welcoming area. ...And the vision is that when this happens the children will take some of the responsibilities for actually knocking down those walls so that they will be involved in opening the school up to the community. (HT, Oak Tree Primary)*

'Parents' were more of a concern for primary schools than for secondaries; a major focus here was the attempt to involve them more closely in the curricular and pedagogic work of the school, and with the education of their children. Teachers' discussion of such a project was couched in mixed terms, with a sense of potential accompanied by the realisation that involvement may not have developed as fully as they anticipated, or that, while achievements had certainly been registered, there was still a long way to go. The picture in this respect is consistent, across the case study schools.

There was much that schools were pleased about. At Juniper Primary, the creative agent was enthusiastic about cultural and linguistic diversity: there were a huge number of languages; a huge number of cultural backgrounds and 'it's very much an inner city school' on the edge of a number of different cultural circuits which the school accommodates very well. Another perceived gain has to do with parents' involvement in their children's learning. CP offered new reasons for parents to engage with schools

*(The Creativity Agenda) changes relations between the school and parents. Because there are "more active things going on" parents come into the school more often. They also have a different role in relation to homework. The topics are "pushed out into the home", and children are given a matrix of possible home-based activities, from which they select some. Much less reliance on worksheets, and parents are "enabled" to help their children in different and more creative ways. Some parents have organised trips to galleries, for their children, and others – small groups in the holidays (Teacher, Hazel Primary – researcher's notes).*

Schools extended the ways in which they communicated with parents.

*We discovered this new way of documenting and it was much more accessible for the parents so when you go round and you look at the corridors now they are absolutely choc-a-bloc full of gorgeous pictures of children who are thoroughly - it's not Johnny standing like this and saying: 'Look I've made a pot'. It's Johnny in there making his pot so the other children and parents can see that Johnny loves getting mucky and this is what he is doing ... It could*

*be just a day or it could be a week but if we see a child having a learning experience which we think is going to be an interesting learning experience we have to get digital images and make lots of observations about what the child's doing and what learning is going on. And also observations of what they are saying. And then we record it as a kind of document which, at the moment, we are sending home to try and get the parents involved as well.* (HT, Mimosa Nursery)

Almost without apparently trying, some schools found that they were engaged differently with their communities:

*It was about children taking ownership and teachers being able to use their imaginations and do what they feel is right. And it more than exceeded my expectations. The people that we've met through it and the impact they've had on the children and the teachers and the families. That was another thing: we got the community involved.* (HT, Elm Primary)

But, as the Mimosa Nursery quotation above suggests – ‘to try and get the parents involved’ – most teachers we interviewed tended to express a sense of limitation. Their efforts to engage parents more deeply in the learning of their children did not always seem to them successful. Their ideal was often a strong one, evoked in one teacher's account of a visit to schools in Pistoia:

*All the time your brain was just going and going everywhere you looked. And behind it all was this philosophy; this feeling that the teachers there were valued and trusted but they knew what they wanted to do and they were given the space and the freedom to do that. And all the time there was dialogue between children and teachers; dialogue between teachers and teachers; dialogue between parents and teachers and by administrators and teachers the whole time. And it was a challenging philosophy as well.* (Teacher, Oak Tree Primary)

When it came to practice, however, parent/teacher dialogue was more limited:

*They were happy to bring their children to school but it was hard to get them beyond that... One of the aims was to involve the parents but it just didn't happen. But they have been involved and if you talk to them they will tell you that there have been lots of changes in this school and they like the changes. The parents are on board even though we haven't done as much as we would like with them* (HT, Mimosa Nursery)

*I do think there is a climate where the parents are coming to school for some things but not for other things and they are not really used to being in school.* (Teacher, Oak Tree Primary)

These problems were explained, and handled, in various ways in which poverty and cultural difference both played a part. ‘Literacy is a problem in the area’, explained one headteacher. ‘We were putting up an installation in the hall and really hoped that the parents would come but we didn't send a letter, we just asked the children to tell them and that hall was packed’ (HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants). Another school, perceiving a difference between an educational culture in which ‘creativity’ was now highly valued, to a home culture in which it had no such importance, linked its

'internal' projects of creativity to a persistent strategy of explaining its work to 'external audiences': 'we had a sort of open evening in the library and parents came in and talked about it. We asked them for their opinions of this school; what they liked about it; what they'd like to change.' (CP Coordinator, Oak Tree Primary.) A teacher in a third school also claimed to identify dissonant cultural values, claiming also, though, that some differences had been resolved:

*The school is in a community where creativity is not particularly valued – academic qualifications are valued. It's a more affluent Muslim community and they have some powerful figures in the community. They are more willing to go further than we would expect. There are still issues around clothing for PE, music and dance. (Teacher, Hazel Primary)*

We can thus summarise some fairly clear patterns: schools regarded changing their relationships with parents and the community as an important part of their strategies for change; they knew that these relationships were shaped by factors outside schools' control, but this recognition did not hold them back from trying. In the process, some schools achieved significant changes to their own cultures. Within this overall picture, there were school-specific differences in the relationship between schools and their communities. We could tabulate these, roughly, as follows in Table 9.

Community as deficit	Plumtree College
Community as market	Hazel Primary
Community as community of difference, with which to be in dialogue	Mulberry Primary Juniper Primary
Community as assets rich	Rowan Nursery and Infants Hazel Primary
Community as potential but hard-to-reach partner in learning	Oak Tree Primary Mimosa Nursery Elm Primary
Community as resource to support inclusion and enterprise	Chestnut Secondary
Community as resource to support enterprise	Blackthorn Federation Sycamore Comprehensive
Community seen from a pastoral perspective, recognising diversity	Silver Birch High
Education as a project of community regeneration	Most schools, but with different evaluations of community capacity (see above).

**Table 9: School views of community**

## **Chapter 5: LEADING AND MANAGING CREATIVE SCHOOL CHANGE**

We have already reported on issues related to leading and managing change in our interim report (see also Thomson & Sanders, 2009) and our intention here is to summarise this previous work and to relate it directly to case study schools. As in previous sections, we also develop heuristics which we hope will assist CP's further work.

### **Leading 'capacity building'**

We take as our starting point that what is often called 'capacity building' is the key to making changes in pupil learning and in school cultures and structures. That is, what is at stake in school change is the development of the competences and repertoires that teachers use, through

- a systematic process of staff learning, supported by
- a culture which promotes professional inquiry and growth, and
- the building up of leadership density in which there are opportunities not only for delegation but also for individuals and groups of staff to have ideas, take initiatives and bring them to fruition, as well as
- structures which not only allow staff to learn, but which also recognise, value and use the knowledge that staff possess in order to guide and make decisions about institutional reform and redesign

The task of designated senior school leaders then is both cultural and structural, both leadership and management.

Research into school change strongly suggests the critical importance of collaboration, with schools whose normative climate is characterised by collaboration being more able to initiate and sustain change than schools whose normative climate is characterised by autonomy. In non-collaborative schools, senior leaders' instructional assistance or focus serves no purpose. However, there are different forms of collaboration, and there is agreement that what is sometimes called 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves, 1994) is less productive of change than collaboration which is voluntaristic, focused and well supported (Achinstein, 2002; Westheimer, 1998). While school change is always subject to organisational and local micro-politics (Datnow, 1998; Duke, 2008) and authentic collaboration is in itself insufficient to produce change, it is a necessary component. Furthermore, as Elmore (2004, p.62) notes,

while participation in collaborative work increases teachers' commitment and satisfaction, it is unlikely to result in changes in teachers' practice, skills and knowledge in the absence of a clear organisational focus on all three.

In other words, the ways in which the senior leadership team - and most particularly the headteacher - focus on pedagogical change, and what kind of pedagogical change they promote and why, are also very significant.

### **Leading and managing change in the case study schools**

While headteachers generally agreed that the success of initiatives such as CP depended on the support of the headteacher, and that there were powerful reasons for supporting it, this did not mean that all of them saw this as equating to direct

involvement in its operations. Their personal interest, their stance to change, as well as the size of the school, competing priorities and situated-ness, all played a part in the various ways in which CP was introduced and then managed.

Our snapshot data suggests that CP permeated schools via one of four change modalities. It was, variously:

1. part of the control and command architecture of the school. Senior managers decided the vision for the school using CP, and then included it in their mandated school improvement and evaluation documents. In some instances it was written into performance management agreements, or
2. a new 'side by side' approach where CP sat outside the control and command architecture. Senior managers allowed a more democratic and open forum for discussion and decision making about a particular topic or topics. There was some opportunity for staff to take control of agendas. The ways in which this fed back into the control and command architecture were via senior management, or
3. the stimulus for changing from a command and control architecture to something where teachers could influence change through a 'top down-bottom up' approach. Senior managers reviewed their governance and management structures as part of the process of mobilising the CP offer and consciously addressed the ways in which knowledge generated through CP would inform curriculum review and be the basis for professional development, or
4. CP was taken up in schools where the senior leadership team were already working to change the command and control approach, or in the minority that already worked differently. Senior managers had a set of processes which allowed staff at any level or section of the school to initiate change. There was a process through which this could be evaluated and communicated, and there were decision-making fora which allowed for informed debate about spreading changes through the organisation.

However even in schools with strong command and control structures, it was often not the headteacher who exercised direct steerage of CP. Very often CP was delegated to a designated co-ordinator within the school, usually one of the senior management team, and/or a creative agent external to the school staff. One 'driver of change' told us

*I was previously deputy and my role was to deal with Creative Partnerships so all that was driven by me really right from conception. When I became headteacher obviously I had to relinquish that to some extent although I still play a fundamental part. I could have said that the CP co-ordinator was just a classroom teacher with no access to senior management, but that was not the way I wanted to go. This initiative had to be driven by senior management. ... an assistant headteacher has taken over the Creative Partnership role and he drives it very much from the top. ...we found that if it isn't driven by school leadership then, very often, it can be lost in the ether (HT, Sycamore Comprehensive).*

By contrast a 'fixer' head whose eyes were firmly on the way to improve test results, and for whom CP was a way to improve school culture, morale and public image explained,

*The work that we do with (Creative Agent) is very important and he is part of the fabric of this school ... I think he is key to that. He is the one who makes all of these connections. You need someone strong in school and then the school to support it, and then you need all your partners, but you also need that person in the middle who can liase and do all those bits (HT, Chestnut Secondary).*

Professional development and induction were strongly connected to the change approach taken by the senior management and the head. In some cases this meant a firm commitment to eliminating resistance or 'slackers'. This stands in contrast to the more nurturing, developmental approach taken by a head who saw herself as an 'enabler of change'.

*We very carefully place any new staff coming in so that they are with an established team so they are sucked straight into the established team and the way that team works. And we choose our staff very carefully and we look for innovative people who can fit into our environment. We have our own induction. (HT, Rowan Nursery and Infants)*

In our report on the snapshot schools we noted that opportunities for staff to contribute ideas and views in the change process were less problematic for smaller schools, usually primary, than for larger secondary schools. In the wider study we noted that nearly half of the secondary schools with 'strong leader' heads did manage annual events where staffs, and often pupils, were able to contribute to debate about change directions. This was the case with all of the case study secondary schools. Larger schools had to establish formal mechanisms through which staff could influence change beyond these infrequent events. In smaller schools whole staffs could regularly meet together, formally and informally, for discussion and debate.

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School	Change modality	Systematic process of staff learning	Culture of professional inquiry	Leadership density	Staff participation in decision-making
<b>Chestnut Secondary</b> Secondary comprehensive, not long out of special measures. Aspiring to be specialist performing arts	Side by side	Staff encouraged to go to CPD events. Twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil free day	Emergent. Some teacher reflection of CP events.	Energetic Creative Agent and Assistant Principal took CP lead and have most of the ideas. Some involvement by middle managers. Staff keen supporters of events	No staff discussion of CP or its directions. Staff participation in annual review.
<b>Elm Primary</b> Small, rural, middle class, 'good school'. Expanding from junior to primary, new buildings.	Top down-bottom up	CPD plan for staff which included whole staff meetings, individual CPD planning. Whole staff pupil free days	Staff meeting used regularly for professional discussions	Staff in early years leading innovations across school as well as in their classrooms. All staff able to innovate Innovative restructuring of promotion positions to widen SLT.	Staff meetings made decisions which then went to governing body. Head did not feel the need to take many decisions by herself.
<b>Hazel Primary</b> Successful inner-city school, now part of federation.	Side by side though with strong directive element	Strong arrangements for induction of new staff. Head's recruitment policy focused on creative capacities of applicants.	Staff encouraged to develop interest in creativity research and practice.	Advanced skills teachers with strong creativity brief.	Staff involved in elaboration of 'vision' and strategy.
<b>Juniper Primary</b> Inner city school, socially mixed intake.	Top down, bottom up	Opportunities for individual staff to pursue creativity-related learning.	Staff involved in links of several kinds to arts-related creative practice in the city.	Headteacher commitment, plus a number of individual staff.	(Acknowledged) uneven staff involvement in development of creativity-related work.
<b>Mimosa Nursery</b> Located in high poverty suburban estate in city	Side by side	Whole staff CPD. Individuals encouraged to attend conferences and take up CPD opportunities, including, eg, specialist Forest School training.	School provided CPD programme for local teachers and LA; keen to develop this further.	Committed head and CA (who was also a governor and participating artist)	Emphasis on whole staff involvement
<b>Mulberry Primary</b> medium sized primary with 99% EAL and in deprived urban locality	Side by side: 'we are all involved in the planning' (HT)	Recruitment focus on people who are 'willing to try new things' HT. Opportunities for staff involvement with external researchers/practitioners, especially through drama.	Through drama, and through process of sustained reflection, supported e.g. by LEA resources, on issues of ethnicity and community.	Strong head teacher commitment; change in head lessened whole-school interest in 'creativity' projects.	Emphasis on whole staff involvement

CREATIVE SCHOOL CHANGE FINAL REPORT, 2009

<p><b>Oak Tree Primary</b> Large multicultural primary</p>	Top down, bottom up	Whole staff CPD events; extra opportunities for related learning in conjunction with CA.	Developing. Think Tank encouraged to take up and develop issues which were then put to whole staff.	Head supported and supported by CP Co-ordinator and cadre of Think Tank staff. CA strongly committed to school development.	Emphasis on whole staff involvement in final decision making.
<p><b>Plumtree College</b> Secondary comprehensive serving deprived estate plus older more established middle class community Poor building stock</p>	Top down	Some twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil free day Staff can access out of school CPD.	No staff inquiry projects	CP led by AP who was keen to extend student voice to students evaluating staff. Some teachers involved in projects	SLT decision making.
<p><b>Rowan Nursery and Infants</b> Small nursery and infant school in high poverty suburban estate</p>	Devolved	Emphasis on learning together within and about the school community. Opportunities for systematic analysis and reflection built in to school schedule.	Strong, and developed beyond traditional CPD offering, eg attendance at Appleby Horse Fair to better understand traveler families' issues.	Strong bonds between more experienced staff, including head, and strong commitment to bringing newer staff into school community.	Emphasis on whole staff involvement (including artists)
<p><b>Silver Birch High</b> Catholic secondary school (non-grammar) in area with selective secondary system Specialist Arts College.</p>	Side by side. In relation to creativity, many dispersed projects.	Learning is individualised, rather than collective.	Staff learning is specific to particular projects, rather than generalised across the field of creativity.	Head teacher not involved at level of detail. Teachers encouraged to develop projects, while SMT focus is on funding, specialist school status etc.	At project, rather than whole-school level.
<p><b>Sycamore Comprehensive</b> Medium size specialist business and enterprise college Located in middle class area but serving nearby estate. Comprehensive in grammar school system.</p>	Top down	Some twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil free days on CP programmes Staff can access out of school CPD.	No staff inquiry but student led inquiry projects are regular feature of school and used to review CP	Creativity middle management post created. Middle management involved in talks about creativity agenda in school and how performance management might assist in institutionalising it	Staff meetings consultation on CP. Major initiative in Year 7 had staff agreement as did its review.

**Table 10: Capacity building through leadership and management**

### Capacity building in the English policy context

At the beginning of this report we suggested that the English policy agenda is a mix of standards and creativity approaches. Researchers have documented the ways in which the standards agenda can create tensions in schools – see for example work around performativity (e.g. Ball, 2003; Gleeson & Husbands, 2001), critiques of tests and their effects in schools (e.g. Gillbourn & Youdell, 2000) and investigations of choice policies (e.g. Gorard, Taylor, & Fitz, 2003). Our research also suggests some tensions<sup>xviii</sup>. Schools which are identified, through test and examination results, as needing to make significant improvements can be placed under intense scrutiny from local authorities (e.g. Mulberry Primary, Plumtree College)<sup>xix</sup>. While they are provided with intensive support in the form of external partners, these people are sometimes not as well informed as they might be about creativity and the ways in which creative approaches might work to produce the desired learning gains (e.g. Plumtree College). Inspection teams also appeared to have variable understandings of the creativity agenda (e.g. Rowan Nursery and Infants).

The net result of this is that in some schools there can be:

- a strong focus on what can be done quickly in order to lift results via booster classes and coaching for those students on the cusp of acceptable marks (e.g. Plumtree College) and/or
- vocational/applied courses in which students might achieve better results (e.g. Sycamore, Chestnut). The effect of this 'fixing' is to confine creative approaches to extra curricular and non-critical mainstream areas, and/or
- more rigid 'setting' arrangements for students designated most at risk ( e.g. Plumtree College)
- the implementation of performance management systems which work against teachers taking the risks to try out new approaches ( e.g. Sycamore, Plumtree College) and/or
- a narrow skills-focused CPD designed to support those narrow (default) pedagogies which will produce better results (Plumtree College). This militates against collaborative professional learning

We suggest that heads who use combinations of these strategies, and do not move on from them, are 'fixer' heads. In some instances, as is the case in Chestnut, such heads move on when the school is 'fixed', and leave the way open for a differently oriented head to take over.

The creativity agenda might at first glance appear to set itself up as a counter to the standards agenda, but CP's approach has been more pragmatic than conflictual. On the one hand it has set out to try to change narrow pedagogies that characterised the first wave of the standards agenda, but on the other it also suggests that creativity is the way to improve standards. Some researchers (Jeffrey & Woods, 2009) now suggest that while schools initially found creativity and standards difficult to reconcile, those that are not in a category that invites intervention are now much better able to manage both agendas at once. Some of the schools that we examined also mediated both agendas for the benefit of students and staff (e.g. Mimosa Nursery, Rowan Nursery and Infants).

We do not want to suggest that standards and creativity constitute a good/bad binary. We agree with the equity commitments that drive the standards agenda, and with the need to have data about students' learning in order to monitor the in/equitable effects of schooling. We also strongly support CP's intentions to shift

narrow pedagogies and create professional capacity within schools. We too are interested in ways that these might be brought together.

But we also want to suggest that, just as is the case with the standards agenda, there are some difficulties that can arise at school level from the creativity agenda per se, as well as with the combinations of the two. The research we have conducted has provided further evidence that in some instances the intention to provide new learning opportunities for teachers as well as for students has stemmed from, and played out as, a deficit view of teachers. Creative practitioners are seen by definition to be creative, but the corollary is that teachers can also be seen in need of remedial creativity assistance.

This construction is supported by the aphorism common within the programme of the need to do creative learning not creative teaching. While there is certainly a need to focus strongly on what it is that students are able to do and not simply on what the teacher does, and to recognise that increasing teachers' repertoires does not necessarily equate to changes in affordances for students, within CP this can amount to teachers providing knowledge about the standards and the creative practitioner providing the creative process. The onus then is on the teacher to acquire the creative practitioner's skills in order to sustain creative learning by students.

Maurice Galton's CP funded research (2008) demonstrates that this is often what happens. He suggests that when teachers and practitioners work together there is an early **initiation** stage, in which teachers work with creative practitioners in 'hands on sessions' with students. This can lead to the **consolidation** stage when teachers adapt what has been learnt in 'hands on sessions' to their own teaching. He, and we, found that this was generally what happened in schools where there was sustained engagement between creative practitioners and teachers.

Our data set also queries the limits and the advisability of the exchange of skills and knowledge between teachers and creative practitioners, pointing instead to the benefits of complementarity. The headteacher at Rowan Nursery and Infants, one of the two case study schools which have now included creative practitioners as permanent staff members, argues that she cannot possibly learn what the dancer on her staff has taken twenty years to master. Neither can he learn what she knows after over thirty years of professional practice. She knows what to ask the dancer to do with children, she says - she does not have to do it herself.

Galton argues that there needs to be a step beyond orientation and consolidation which he calls the **re-orientation** stage. In this re-orientation stage, teachers analyse children's 'creative' artefacts just as they would those from any other classroom task and through this, get to grips with the implications of the creative practitioners' pedagogical approach. He suggests this latter stage leads to sustainable capacity and that whole school change occurs when re-orientation is cascaded through the school.

Our data are in agreement with Galton's and we also agree that it is the teacher's pedagogical post-project work which is of critical importance to the ongoing provision of greater learning opportunities for students, not the acquisition of some new technical/aesthetic skills. This however has two implications:

- CP is not aiming to make teachers into creative practitioners
- It is the teacher's professional capacity to translate the creative practitioners' work into pedagogical principles which counts.

This is not a remedial view of teachers, nor is it one which sets teaching and learning against one another. Rather it suggests that changing learning also means changing teaching not just via experience, but by the intellectual work which goes on to make that experience pedagogical. This is the grounded work of producing new knowledge, skills and practice which Elmore (2004) asserts are critical to school change.

School	Degree of reorientation
Chestnut Secondary	Strong emphasis on extra curricular activities which staff saw themselves as capable of running with some outside assistance. Some shift in vocational courses to reorientation with artifacts produced which used the life worlds of students as their basis. However the school senior leadership recognized that its challenge was to reorient mainstream curriculum and this was taken into account in planning
Elm Primary	Strong moves by some early years staff to re-orientation, particularly where staff had pre-existing complementary practice (design, music). Considerable documentation and some analysis of artefacts in all classes. Early years leading the way in tracking and profiling based on holistic documentation.
Hazel Primary	Strong emphasis on induction of new staff to 'creativity'-based approaches – 'NQTs have to be retrained'. Encouragement given to research visits by some staff, and creativity researcher linked to the school. New role of 'professional development teacher' established.
Juniper Primary	Staff development in and through drama is an important feature, enabled by contact with university-based researchers and practitioners. Emphasis also on learning through community links about (e.g.) capacities of parents and what they can bring to the school. HT emphasizes that these are continuations of pre-CP themes.
Mimosa Nursery	Strong emphasis on analysis of artefacts and pedagogies amongst teaching staff. Complementarity between teaching staff and artists not strongly developed at the level of pedagogy; artist/head teacher relationship seen as complementary and key to the strategic development of the school.
Mulberry Primary	Teacher development in Foundation Stage assisted by – e.g. visit to Reggio Emilia – but such approaches not generalized across school. Moves towards creativity induction for all staff, involving CP, but not realised at time of visits. Teacher learning through involvement with creative practitioners. HT emphasises that these are continuations of pre-CP themes.
Oak Tree Primary	Artist led analysis of artefacts, taken up with increasing confidence by teaching staff. Reflection on pedagogies led by subgroup of staff, drawing on artists' feedback, with input from CA. Careful respect for complementarity of roles but working relationship not an equal one (artists are visitors doing project work in the school).
Plumtree College	No analysis of artefacts and pedagogies across school. Creative practitioners seen as having skills separate from teachers'.
Rowan Nursery and Infant	Detailed analysis of artefacts and pedagogies across whole staff including support staff. Full complementarity between teachers and artists.
Silver Birch High	Large-scale transformation not the objective. CP is about developing teachers' understanding of 'creative learning' and how to incorporate creative teaching in lessons – 'gently creating an atmosphere' (DH). Teachers learn through doing and from contact with practitioners rather than through formal CPD activity.
Sycamore Comprehensive	Creative practitioners seen as having separate skills, some of which teachers could acquire. No analysis of artefacts or pedagogies. Particular staff seen as highly competent to undertake student research projects.

**Table 11: Capacity building through teacher learning**

## Chapter 6: PROGRAMME MATTERS

In our interim report we noted that what schools could do was strongly related to what was made available to them by creative practitioners, creative agents and the regional offices. While this research reports on the first phase of CP, we think that it is worthwhile reporting further on this, both for the record, and also because our current experience suggests that some of our analysis is still pertinent to the programme. Relying mainly on a thematised analysis of public-domain documentation and of interviews with agents and directors, we begin with some discussion of creative agents, and then move on to regional and national issues. We conclude our report with some comments about CP in the context of other international school reform programmes.

### Creative Agents

The definition of the Creative Agent role developed over the period of our research. In the early stages, there were a variety of titles for the job (Creative Development Worker, Creative Advisor, Creative Broker). The 'Creative Agent' title was agreed more generally after the 2006 Burns Owen Partnership (BOP) study had drawn positive conclusions about CP's investment in the role (Burns Owen Partnership, 2006 p. 32) and when an authoritative definition of the role emerged in 2007 from research conducted by Black Country CP on behalf of the National College for School Leadership and CP nationally (Dunne & Haynes, 2007). According to this definition, the role of Creative Agents is

to work with the school leadership team in order to support the development of creative learning and to contribute to school improvement. This is done by establishing a creative learning vision for the school that is closely linked to the school development plan. The Creative Agent fosters an enquiry based approach and supporting partnerships. (Dunne & Haynes, 2007 p. 1)

This work was seen as involving four, not necessarily sequential, phases. These were:

- o **Diagnostic**, which involves analysis of 'where a school is at' and how CP might support school development.
- o **Planning and brokering**, which involves establishing a focus question, enquiry framework and action plan.
- o **Change management**, which involves supporting the school and creative practitioners in introducing and implementing change.
- o **Evaluation and sustainability**, which involves encouraging reflective practice and embedding learning and change. (Dunne & Haynes, 2007 p. 2)

According to this definition, then, the role is primarily about ensuring that 'creative learning' is a feature of school development plans and supporting cycles of action research to develop it further. Job advertisements at the time described the role as an ambassador for creative learning, a critical friend, a creative thinker and a catalyst.

Generally, our observations of the way Creative Agents were required to operate accorded with what the BOP study reported: most CP offices took on agents to appoint practitioners, set budgets and manage projects, and 'all CP offices act[ed] as an intermediary between schools and the practitioner market, facilitating and brokering relationships' because it was felt that schools did not understand the

market. The Burns Owen research had also concluded that there was a high degree of agreement about the qualities that were desirable in Creative Agents. Above all, like the artists, they were required to be sufficiently flexible to work in what the offices called 'a CP way'. This involved 'a willingness to start with the needs of the school rather than importing an external agenda' and this flexibility was valued more highly than specific skills or experience (Burns Owen Partnership, 2006 p. 15).

This section of the report draws on anonymised data from both the snapshot and the case study phases of our work to develop points about the ways in which the Creative Agent role developed. The section ends with a table showing how the Creative Agents in the case study schools matched the types that emerge from this analysis.

The Creative Agents in our sample were from diverse employment backgrounds. Some were former teachers, some were professional arts administrators. There were trainers, entrepreneurs and business people. A significant proportion had worked as artists or creative practitioners before becoming agents, but they were a very mixed group too: they ranged, for example, from a dancer trained to work with children to an architect. Some of this group had worked almost exclusively as school-based artists, while others had never worked in school.

Their different backgrounds made them see the fundamentals of the Creative Agent's role very differently. For example, a former teacher used the role to make sure that the creative practitioners appreciated what teachers do:

*I'm doing some work at the moment with artists coming into school and training up the artists so they can understand the teaching point of view. And it's made me realise how much you take for granted – that, you know, just in terms of managing behaviour in the classroom or organising space or resources. And it's also trying to make non-teachers aware of the kind of pace and pressure that teachers have to work under.*

The former dancer saw the Creative Agent role as requiring him to take a step back and act as the school's 'creative advisor'. On the other hand a visual artist developed the Creative Agent role through promoting of his own artistic practice:

*We are going to exhibit some of the photographs that show the process. Because, for me, I am really interested in the how of creative partnerships between artists and schools – so I have been taking lots of photographs of teachers and artists working together now that dynamic happens.*

A Creative Agent who had previously worked in a bank, saw the core of his work as being about

*getting people to learn huge amounts of skills and information all the time because the business world changes so much. And the thing that I saw there, is that people don't know how to learn and therefore when they are given something new they struggle. So we have to teach them how to learn.*

Broadly, the Creative Agents saw their roles in four different ways. We have labelled these roles manager, developer, consultant and community member. The categories are not mutually exclusive and some individuals adopted different roles and

perspectives at different times, whilst others appeared to identify firmly with just one of the types.

**The managers** wanted to make sure that the CP work fitted in to the systems and plans of the school. They worried about financial sustainability, attendance and staying on rates.

Some saw their prime responsibility as making sure the school plans were carried out. Others saw their responsibility as influencing the school's development processes in order to promote 'the CP way':

*they do work with the schools on their action plans and if, in the early days, a Creative Agent went in and the school said that what they wanted was a mural for the Key Stage 1 playground, the Creative Agent would have said that is not really what Creative Partnerships is for. If it's a particular question you need to answer and that ends up with a mural in the playground then that would be fine...*

These agents saw themselves as project managers, keeping the whole project moving forward.

**The developers**, on the other hand, saw their role primarily as engaging directly with teaching, learning and the curriculum. In some schools, the teachers were very keen to learn new skills from the Creative Agent (e.g. drama skills in a secondary school from the snapshot sample). More often, the Creative Agent researched ideas or offered articles to the school. Other Creative Agents in this group saw the role as about developing the ethos and discourse of the school.

Some were either directly or obliquely critical of what and how the schools were teaching, saying things like:

*the curriculum they use is so outdated really and this [CP work] is bang up to date*

*it's only when the adults take on a different way of working that we will actually achieve our aim*

*The idea is, we animate the curriculum...*

Some of them had very definite views on how to teach:

*all you have to do is to observe what the children are doing and react to that. So you are not forced to plan all these things that the children maybe don't want to do. I feel that the staff have found that quite liberating.*

Some were very committed to the arts and some were very sure that creativity and the arts should be separated.

**The consultants** tended to see themselves as independent creative outsiders who could offer guidance to the schools. They established their difference from the teachers and the artists. One said, for example:

*I haven't got the same kind of paperwork and responsibilities that the staff have got ...My role is far more organic in the space. ..I had to insist that I was not another member of staff and you mustn't start assuming that just because I'm there I'm going to pick up all the staff duties.*

Some offered the teachers guidance about ethics, some saw themselves as inducting and mentoring both teachers and artists:

*I'm being used much more by people as a creative consultant. The agent is kind of part of that but I'm more of a mentor than an agent, because the agent is there to make sure that the paperwork is done. I do that, obviously, but it's much more than that*

Within the schools, some of these Creative Agents saw themselves as a bridge between the teachers and the artists.

Outside school, they saw their role as developing networks, sharing good practice and making links with employers and other agencies.

The last group, the **community members** articulated a strong commitment to the locality and saw the Creative Agents' work in terms of community development:

*I asked to work here. I live locally and it's my community school and when we had the list of who the core schools were going to be in [the city] I knew [the school] had been selected and I asked if I could work here. And I feel really privileged to have been here and to be part of what is happening...Families are so tight knit in communities like this and cousins will be here and there. I love being here*

Creative Agents who adopted this perspective sometimes took on complex portfolios of different roles with the same school. One former dancer, for example, became the Creative Agent and a governor after his original work in the school as a creative practitioner.

The degree of priority that each of the Creative Agents gave to the four elements of the role – diagnosis/analysis, planning/brokering, change management, evaluation/reflection – related to the ways they understood their job.

The Creative Agents who we have characterised as 'community members' were most likely to understand and talk about the interconnections between the different phases of the cycle. For example in a school with a strongly community focused Agent, the evaluation process which was jointly conducted by teachers and artists, the Creative Agent's role as evaluator was given a high profile and kept distinct from the roles of the creative practitioners and the school staff.

The 'managers' were also very attentive to evaluation and to documenting outcomes in ways that were coherent with the schools' standards agenda and reporting requirements:

*we are going to eventually have to develop our own vocabulary and the school will presumably push this forward or CP will push it forward so we will be able to spot creativity, analyse it and establish what level it is at.*

On the other hand, the 'developers' were sometimes sceptical about how useful evaluation was:

*I feel sometimes that an awful lot of the evaluation and the monitoring that go on for CP is lost in the ether and quite where and how that information is ever put to any real use is beyond me.*

Planning and brokering were taken very seriously amongst the Creative Agents with a strong community focus, although the nature of the brokering varied between schools. On the basis of her analysis about the kinds of challenges that would stimulate the school (which included the need to develop its understanding of 'critical aesthetics'), one Creative Agent had brokered a very successful partnership with a high status London-based collaborative of artists and architects. Another community-focused Creative Agent worked to build a tight-knit cadre of artists, trialling and sometimes rejecting those artists who were unable to match the school's particular requirements.

The 'managers' and 'developers' amongst the Creative Agents were more likely to select artists who were already known to them rather than to take risks.

The degrees of respect the Creative Agents showed for teachers' work varied. The 'community members' tended to be most positive in expressing admiration for what the teachers did; as members of the same community, they identified closely with them as colleagues:

*My bugbear in CP is their attitude of 'let's make all teachers creative'. They are creative on a daily basis, getting through the day. So many times they've been told you've got to do it this way and that way! The key is to give them permission to do it differently.*

The 'developers' liked to offer direct support to teachers and pupils to help them be more creative:

*This morning I am going to roll my sleeves up and go into a classroom because I've got a teacher who needs that level of support and encouragement to take a few risks and be a bit more adventurous in delivering creative teaching and he knows that.*

They often characterised teachers as lacking confidence or erecting barriers to working in the way the Creative Agent thought would be improve their practice.

*But actually it is a new way of doing things and teachers aren't trained for this way of working and for many teachers who have come into this school – particularly those with a real didactic background – it's been quite difficult working in that cross curricular thematic way at this level. Traditionally there are teachers in all our CP schools who are reluctant to accept creative approaches to teaching*

The Agents who saw themselves more in the role of consultants were most likely to take a damning view of teachers' creativity. Some worried about how the school could sustain creative approaches once the budget for getting artists into the classroom had run dry. Others were dismissive of the teachers:

*they had to start learning about things like observing what the children were doing rather than looking and saying: "Oh, Johnny's just written a number 3. Good, I can tick off on his sheet that he's done a number 3".*

One head teacher described the Creative Agent watching lessons and interrupting to ask teachers to explain the rationale for their work, in a 'challenging but polite, subtle and friendly way'. Another Creative Agent, acting in a 'consultant' role, felt it was appropriate to 'audit' the teachers' creativity:

*When we did the audit one of the things we asked each individual teacher was: where do you locate your creativity? What are the creative things you do? Do you go to the pictures or the theatre? Do you paint or write? And it went right the way through and some people said they do very little and some said they did quite a lot but whatever happens those people probably won't change that*

Most of the Creative Agents spoke about the importance of teachers' professional learning for the sustainability of the work, but attitudes about the relationship of their own Creative Agent role to the teacher's role differed markedly.

There is little evidence in our data to suggest that many of the Creative Agents knew much about the complexities of the schools' policy contexts. They tended to see a simple bifurcation in which the standards agenda was pitted against the creativity agenda, and being didactic was the antithesis of being creative. A significant number adopted deficit discourses about teachers and teaching; they spoke of 'giving teachers permission' to be creative in lessons and demonstrating to them that process matters as well as product. This gives rise to questions about the Creative Agents' own authority to offer advice and 'grant permission', especially as flexibility of approach and commitment to CP's aims seem to have taken priority over pedagogic knowledge in the appointment process.

The data about Creative Agents' roles in the case study schools is patchy, reflecting, arguably, the profile and degree of ongoing involvement they had in each school's creativity agenda, but also the fact that not all schools had a designated Creative Agent. In some schools – including Mimosa Nursery, Chestnut, Oak Tree Primary and Rowan Nursery and Infants - the creative agent was seen as pivotal to developments. In these cases, the creative agent was embedded within the school and the role was well understood by other staff.

School	Creative Agent	Emphasis of Creative Agent
Chestnut Secondary	Manager/Developer	Project managing a range of initiatives; supporting teachers to improve their practice
Mimosa Nursery	Consultant	Improving teachers' creative practice; developing networks; sharing good practice
Oak Tree Primary	Community member	Planning; brokering partnerships
Rowan Nursery and Infants	Community member	Evaluation
Silver Birch High	Manager	Project managing to ensure that decisions are taken and implemented properly
Alder College	Consultant	Support for the school's vision

**Table 12: Creative Agent types**

## National dimensions

We have already identified two tendencies in relation to which the work of CP is positioned, one associated with 'standards', and considerable steerage from above; the other – 'creativity' – based on looser forms of governance and involving an attempt to stimulate and utilise the innovative capacities of schools and teachers. We suggested that CP's position in relation to these tendencies has not been – and could not be expected to be – stable. We also set out our assumption that local iterations of CP perspectives would be diversely shaped, according both to patterns of social and educational development, and to the intellectual and cultural resources from which CP participants could draw. These were the perspectives from which we interpreted our interview material.

In our interviews with the national leadership team of CP, we found that the relationship between 'standards' and 'creativity' was perceived in differing ways (Jones & Thomson, 2008). One interviewee stated that: 'There is no inherent contradiction between creative teaching and ... supporting achievement'. The relationship between creativity and achievement, s/he noted, was concretised at school level in the incorporation of CP work into the a school's development plan, and 'whatever a school does in its work ... is linked to their school improvement agenda' (Interviewee C). Other interviewees, however, spoke with a different emphasis: 'And dare I say it, it [CP] has broken free from some of the shackles and inhibitions of working towards a straightforward standards agenda although never wanting to shy away from the challenge of standards and attainments, but realising that there is a broader agenda as to what it means to educate young people' (Interviewee B). Similar unresolved differences in inflection affected understanding of other aspects of CP's work. For one leader, CP was a 'resource for managers', rather than a 'grassroots movement done by a few maverick teachers' (Interviewee C). For another, it was a 'kind of reconnection to a set of values that used to underpin what education meant'.

CP's organisational structure allowed such different approaches to co-exist. The national CP organisation had no direct line management responsibility for its local operations, though areas had to provide aggregated data about expenditure and participation to national CP, which was itself accountable to Arts Council England. This loose system of governance allowed national CP to see itself in a leadership, rather than a management, role, and to understand itself as 'learning', 'innovating' and 'experimenting' - doing something less fixed and determined than other more hierarchically structured policy initiatives. CP leaders set much store on a willingness to begin from the self-defined needs of a school, rather than pre-determined formulae: 'we don't come with the answers but the resources and the questions' (Interviewee A). Likewise, in terms of the research and publications that it sponsored, it often sought to promote debate and reflection rather than advancing a particular policy line (Banaji & Burn, 2007; Thomson, 2007c). (It could be argued that, with the 2009 restructuring of CP, a more normative view of creative practice has developed; as one RD put it, 'in some ways, we will move away from what feels like a freer way of working and come down to delivering a package to a school in a certain fixed way. So I wouldn't call it an opening up.')

At the same time as emphasising dialogue, and the uncertainties involved in developing creative practice, national CP paid great attention to issues of profile and branding. In relation to government, media, the cultural industries and the world of

education, CP 'performed itself' as a national programme. Leadership was exercised by means of this capacity to project a national identity, through conferences, initiatives, publications and an elaborate website through which a limited set of aims was clearly and repeatedly elaborated. Under this umbrella, a diverse set of local activities was pursued, justified by the general claim that a knowledge society requires creative learning, and tending – in terms of headline rhetoric if not detailed argument – to present creative learning as key to the solution of a great number of problems, from 'individual fulfilment' to economic growth to 'social cohesion' (Interviewee C).

Arguably, the national emphasis on branding and profile encouraged some schools and regions to play a similar game, in the process over-claiming the achievements and underestimating the difficulties of whole school change. (For example, Sycamore Comprehensive was frequently adduced by national CP figures as an exemplary instance of the realisation in the form of 'enterprise' of the creativity agenda, when, 'on the ground' the difficulties involved in such a project were widely registered by school staff.)

### **Regional dimensions**

We interviewed 11 Regional Directors, that is, the directors of nearly all the regions in which our second round of case study schools were located. These interviews, supported by aspects of our school-focused research, confirmed for us a sense of CP's diversity, and of the ways in which varying local histories and situations, and different types of educational, cultural and political commitment on the part of regional actors produced different configurations of CP activity, and – most significantly – different conceptions of the *scope* of the possibilities offered by CP.

Interviewees tended to underline the looseness of CP governance, at least in the earlier years of its existence. This was most fully explained by Oak Tree Primary's RD:

*There has always been a sense, up until now, that the people that were in the areas were in the best place to make decisions about their local area because there was a sense that there was not necessarily one single way of doing things and you had to find your way through the relationships you have and the resources that you have. All those conditions vary so much from area to area so there has been a sense that we were allowed to develop a programme that was right for us and in the way that was right for us.*

Others confirmed this: 'they started off by giving a huge amount of power and flexibility to the local teams' (RD Sycamore Comprehensive Region); in the words of another 'it feels like a very slack structure in a way' (RD Silver Birch High Region).

Yet despite this emphasis on diversity, there were evident common threads in the ways in which many Regional Directors understood their work. We found evidence of a CP 'vulgate' – a common language in which to discuss the programme's work and in which to explain the focuses selected, the resources mobilised and the aims developed. As one might expect, this vulgate possessed both the advantage of giving a coherence to CP, across regional boundaries, and the disadvantage of sometimes masking specific problems and difficulties. Some RDs possessed a fluent command of the vulgate; others employed it only to a limited extent.

In terms of their understanding of the context in which they worked, the most common perspective that we encountered elaborated CP's concern with 'areas of deprivation'. RDs referred to a 'poverty of aspiration' that was thought to afflict working-class communities. They tended automatically to read off this problem of aspiration from the economic situation they described:

*very low aspirations in the town because ... research showed up that the average salary earned in (the town) was something like £27,000 but the average salary earned by people who lived in the town was £15,000. So poverty of aspiration was a big issue for us. (RD, Silver Birch High)*

Similarly, in Chestnut's area:

*We try and tie into regeneration issues and local issues – at the moment aspirations are pretty poor in (the area) because of the demise of the heavy industries. (RD, Chestnut Secondary)*

On the basis of this type of diagnosis, the purpose of creativity tends to be discussed in terms of improving low self-image and raising aspirations:

*we were involved in the arts because we believed they would raise standards in schools and it would get kids going and increase their aspirations. It would push them beyond their limits. (RD, Chestnut Secondary)*

The raising of individual aspirations is linked then to a wider social project:

*a commitment to community cohesion and trying to pin that down very much to the development of X as a city .... (RD, Mulberry Primary).*

The linkage between the raising of student aspirations and the regeneration of urban areas thus form one strong theme in regional directors' accounts of their work. This is complemented by a number of claims relating to the impact of CP on school cultures, including the 'professional development of staff' (Mulberry Primary RD) and outcomes:

*We have a lot of success and to some degree we've cracked the holy grail of attainment. There are a number of our schools who tell us that we've had a direct impact on attainment since we've been working with them. (RD, Sycamore Comprehensive).*

Success here is explained in terms of 'a real open culture of sharing and discussing' (RD Chestnut) and:

*a closeness to SMT – (our) programmers have access to SMTs on a regular basis ... An initial discussion at leadership level has been the start of any project before we start talking to teachers. (RD Sycamore Comprehensive)*

Other interviewees did not forget to emphasise CP's contribution to 'the professional development of workers in the cultural sector' (RD Mulberry Primary).

Statements like these signal a common attitude among a majority of RDs, who see themselves as *policy entrepreneurs* (Ball, 1998), responding to national initiatives, and mobilising local resources so as to realize them:

*In terms of the work that we are doing and its prominence nationally, that is going really well. It's just a case of pushing the fact that this is worth doing and it is coming down the line policy-wise and we are doing the best we can to position ourselves at the forefront of that. (RD Chestnut Secondary)*

It was plain that this approach found an echo in several of our case study schools, which likewise saw themselves as agile institutions, working with their regions to elaborate CP themes, and to link them both to school improvement initiatives, and to attempts to exploit other sources of funding. CP was sometimes seen here as providing a valuable encouragement to this kind of enterprise, which, according to one school-based interviewee, had 'come from the whole CP idea really' (HT Mimosa Nursery). Some RD's saw evidence of considerable change over the period of their work, with 'entrepreneurial skills and schools improving and getting more confidence ... The environment that we are working in now is very different from what it was six years ago.' (RD Hazel Primary).

Not all Regional Directors, however, claimed adherence to, or success in terms of, a common national agenda. One city-based RD was concerned to emphasise the intractability of the problems which CP addressed, sketching the effects of a number of structural constraints:

*Standards was the least of the problems. It was more about getting kids in through the door and keeping them there without any kind of major incidents. ... I would accept that there is some tension between CP and the standards agenda but I'd go further than that and say that the structure of the schools and the kind of tradition that they – they haven't moved very far in terms of - ... in terms of the way that young people live their lives...(RD, Juniper Primary)*

The same interviewee drew attention less to the intrinsic – as it were, self-generated - problems of working-class students (low self-esteem, for instance) than to the social-structural determinants of their situation. She spoke of 'regeneration' but also of:

*A huge polarisation of communities on the fringes of that regeneration or people not physically on the fringes but who are becoming more and more isolated.*

It followed from this that the psychological properties of students (and their teachers) were not at the explanatory centre of things. The problem was rather relational: there is a conflict between the way schools are organised and 'the way that young people live their lives'. This situation 'desperately' required change, but only a handful of schools were 'confident and innovative enough and probably in quite desperate circumstances really' to begin the process of 'embedding creativity'.

Correspondingly, the accent of CP strategy fell on relatively modest initiatives, working with teachers to identify their interests and improve their capacities, 'sharing experience' and working towards what was described – in an oxymoronic phrase which expressed both modesty and an awareness of the scale of educational problems – as 'a bit more of a sea change' (RD Juniper Primary). From the perspective of this interviewee, the problems of operationalising CP philosophy had to do with lack of funding, lack of commitment on the part of LAs and the pressure of

teachers' work, which meant that their interest in anything happening outside their own school was 'necessarily limited'.

Other RDs also, though more briefly, presented their work in terms of the impact upon it of institutional and cultural constraints. The RD in Rowan's area spoke in careful terms about the nuances of the CP-local authority relationship: in the earlier years of CP, the authority had experienced 'instability' – lots of staff changes and reorganisation. This had since 'settled down' – though not to the point where CP could claim to be a strategic partner in an authority-wide programme of improvement. It was rather that CP had:

*tended to gravitate towards people in the local authority who share what we are doing to some degree and are our natural allies. Of course we've challenged a more narrow, standards led, view that some people might have but we haven't challenged it in a very direct way: it's more making a case for what we are doing in trying to raise achievement and attainment and trying to get that at the centre of school improvement rather than having it as an enrichment or a marginalised thing that is going on on the sidelines.*

Other RDs shared this perspective, and presented their successes in measured terms. Oak Tree Primary's Regional Director stressed that the local authority's 'Children's and Young Persons' services is supportive of us and we are able to work very closely together.' However, 'having said that, there is sometimes a sense of us not necessarily working to the same agenda and that the issue that crops up all the time in education is attainment. [...]we do not want to get bogged down into the attainment debate.' (RD Oak Tree Primary)

A similar, careful, balance-sheet was drawn by the RD of Mimosa Nursery's region, who spoke glowingly of the school:

*Between 2004 and 2005 and it was at that point that they really went through this huge awakening in terms of the potential of changing the structure of their day; their curriculum; their approach to work force development and the disposition of the leadership and their willingness to actually work with us to try new avenues and approaches has meant that they have actually gone through this amazing process of change and, for us, they really are our success story and they are a source of great pride really.*

But Mimosa Nursery, the RD added, needed to be set in a larger picture. No other school was as successful, and several of the schools originally associated with CP had not 'moved on' at all:

*For some schools the terminology that we used in terms of whole school change has been quite hard to respond to sometimes and I do feel that it is, to some respect, too idealistic for many schools who are actually struggling with huge challenges and deprivation and all those other factors that are against so many of these schools. [...]*

Where it had occurred, success had stemmed from the strength of 'individual practitioners' working with receptive schools' (Mimosa Nursery RD), which were open to discussion about their needs, rather than being 'commissioners of a CP input about whose terms they were already certain' (Rowan Nursery and Infants RD).

Change was 'fragile', however, even in the best of circumstances (Rowan Nursery and Infants RD) and came without long-term guarantees.

The Director of one of the smaller regions focused on the condition of a few schools and the plight of their headteachers – the LA was 'not being really supportive to schools' and 'in the end it just wore her (the head) down' (RD Elm Primary). CP itself was not in a strong position to help because it had gone through 'three Directors in less than three years and it alienated, I think, quite a lot of its original schools because every new person had a different take on things'.

Another commented that her LA 'didn't seem to value anything to do with creativity or cultural input' (RD Plumtree College). Inter-school competition had assigned Plumtree College in particular to a 'very bad place' and to develop CP had been a 'real challenge in many schools particularly where heads have come and gone and particularly where the standards agenda has been pushed because that school is in special measures'.

Prominent in comments like these were references to the endemic problems of education. 'Personally,' said the RD of Elm's area, 'I don't find schools as being the most creative places. If you work too much in schools [as an artist] you can lose some of your creativity really'; it was thus one thing to 'give the kids experience' but to 'embed (creativity) in the school is something else'. The same interviewee emphasised the problems of teacher involvement in CP:

*they just think it's an opportunity for them to sit in the corner however much I lecture them and say they have to be part of this and use it in their curriculum teaching and so on.*

On the basis of the interview evidence, it seems reasonable to conclude that there were two distinct approaches among RDs, one of which we could term 'strategic', the other 'tactical'. The strategic approach tended to be bolder in its initiatives, and more entrepreneurial in its realisation of the possibilities for local development. It sometimes had the disadvantage, though, of masking difficulty, and of overlooking the already-established capacities of some CP schools in the area of creativity. The tactical approach tended to prioritise initiatives at the level of the school. Sometimes this focus was the result of choice, more often it came from a sense of constraint - a perceived lack of support from the local authority, the insuperable difficulties forced upon schools by their market situation, or doubts about the commitment or capacity of a school staff.

Region	Strategic Orientation	Tactical Orientation
Chestnut Secondary	Raising educational standards in context of aspirations for local & regional regeneration	
Elm Primary		School-focused and arts-based improvement in teaching and quality of learning
Hazel Primary		involvement through enabling links between schools and creative practitioners; a 'minor player' in regeneration, but seeing opportunities for a wider role: 'I think the challenge is: how can we use this programme to move into something else.'
Juniper Primary		Modest initiatives to improve teacher capacity and develop arts-based learning.

Mimosa Nursery		School-focused rethinking of teaching and learning, rendering the school a regional hub/beacon for CPD locally.
Mulberry Primary	Community cohesion through linking work of educational and cultural sectors.	
Oak Tree Primary		School-focused improvement in teaching and quality of learning
Plumtree College		Contributing to school improvement through a variety of 'creative' approaches, including pupil voice.
Rowan Nursery and Infants		School-focused and arts-based improvement in teaching & quality of learning
Silver Birch High		School-focused and arts-based improvement in teaching and quality of learning
Sycamore Comprehensive	Achieving 'cultural change' in schools so as to promote local & regional regeneration	

**Table 13: Regional foci**

### CP in its international context

Creative Partnerships began in 2002 and has funding until 2011. In the life of school reform programmes this is a medium term investment. Given that most reform programmes are short term, and are inevitably critiqued for their failure to stay the distance to create any sustainable effect, and given that seven to nine years is sometimes credited as being the length of time needed to make meaningful institutional change (Hargreaves & Goodson, 2006; Thomson, 2007a), then CP can also be seen as an intervention which might be expected to produce significant results. Our research took place between 2006-2008; that is long enough for there to be signs of change, but also not long enough to be able to make summative comments about its 'success'. That also was not our project: our aim was to investigate how schools took up what CP had to offer. Nevertheless we are in a position to say something about CP as a reform programme.

The closest programme to CP that we have found is the A+ Schools Program in North Carolina (Gordon & Patterson, 2008; Noblit et al., 2009; Pink & Noblit, 2005). We think it is worthwhile comparing CP to the A+ approach. A+ is a much smaller programme than CP, spending approximately \$1 million US of Kenan Institute grant funding on 42 schools spread over three states. Beginning with only 25 pilot schools, the programme focuses specifically on the arts rather than creativity, and aims to

- increase the exposure of students to the arts
- foster two-way arts integration
- tap students' multiple intelligences
- adopt an integrated, thematic approach to the major ideas in the curriculum
- increase professional collaboration
- strengthen relations with parents and the community

While CP does not state its aims in this way, preferring instead to provide general statements about creative learning and professional learning, the creativity self evaluation format does promote an examination of curriculum, a greater range of creative approaches to the curriculum, and some movement to cross-curriculum work, as well as relations with parents and the community. It also adds an emphasis on 'pupil voice'.

The greater specificity of aims of the A+ programme is in line with other US reform programmes such as the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) (Muncey & Macquillan, 1996; Sizer, 1985, 1992, 1996; Sizer & Sizer, 2004; Wasley, 1994) and the Comer programme (Comer, Haynes, Joyner, & Ben-Avie, 1996; Joyner, Comer, & Ben-Avie, 2004; Noblit, Malloy, & Malloy, 2001). However A+ staff suggest that it is not a model, but rather a philosophy, and a way of doing things. This is analogous to CP. And while greater specificity of aims might produce more clarity and commonality at the rhetorical level, research into the programme suggests that the actual implementation produces much the same range of vernacularisation as CP.

A+ researchers note that:

- the programme uses an approach that is often devalued and makes it the key to reform
  - schools are able to combine the requirements for accountability and students achievement as well as provide a meaningful and engaging approach
  - A+ schools are simply more desirable places to be
  - the reform is sustainable because it changes the educational experiences of teachers and students
  - schools are able to adapt the programme to their specific requirements.
- (adapted from Noblit et al, 2009, Introduction)

These are claims which CP would make and they are borne out in practice by many of the schools in our study.

A+ provides three key support structures; (1) intensive professional development, (2) a network of support, and (3) a sponsoring organisation.

CP also has professional development at its heart. Unlike A+ this is effected through the provision of creative practitioners and the support of creative agents. This occurs at the school site. A+ on the other hand, a smaller programme, offers CPD at a programmatic level. A+ begins with a five day residential summer institute for as many staff from programme schools as can and want to attend (this is usually close to all) and there are regular five day summer institutes each year which teachers can attend. The summer institute is a US reform convention and has been shown to be significant in the CES and the National Writing Programme (Lieberman & Wood, 2002). These summer institutes offer a blend of teacher and school experience with research based knowledge and this blend is also important to CP although not offered in the same way. We have suggested in other forums that CP might offer something of this sort and the US example does point to the benefits that can be gained from this kind of approach to capacity building beyond the school and region.

Like A+, CES and the National Writing Project, CP also advocates and uses a networking approach which, because it is a large programme, occurs at regional levels. A+ networking occurs at the programmatic level<sup>xx</sup> but includes school district officials in order to ensure congruence of approach and the alignment of support and direction that research suggests is critical to success and sustainable reform (Datnow, Hubbard, & Mehan, 2002; Wohlstetter, Malloy, Chau, & Polhemus, 2003). Our evidence does point to some problems for some schools when there is tension between CP directions and those of the LA (Plumtree College is a key example of the tension between a LA interpretation of the standards agenda and the creativity approach; Mulberry Primary also felt the same push-pull in different directions, while Chestnut was supported by a CP organisation which was actually part of the LA)<sup>xxi</sup>.

CP had its institutional support base in both the Arts Council and the then DfES. However these functioned in a much more distanced way than the Kenan Foundation. The Kenan Foundation was an energetic promoter of the A+ programme and allocated a significant sum to research. The formation of the new charity Creativity Culture and Education (CCE) is not the same and works more like a purchaser/contractor of a suite of programmes and not a funder. Nevertheless, the political lobbying function which the researchers suggest was important to legitimate A+ as a reform programme can be and is carried out by CP nationally and now by CCE.

Finally A+ researchers suggest that the programme was most successful where it has both commonly agreed and understood educational value and organisational prominence within the school. This finding is congruent with this research, where substantively affiliated schools such as Rowan Nursery and Infants and Mimosa Nursery do offer, in our view, examples of schools that have made sustainable change. Given that the CP programme still has some years to run, this is an important indicator of further successes to come.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- (1) CP has operated in a complex policy environment. In an international context, it should be seen as a successful school reform initiative. There is good reason to be upbeat about what has been achieved to date and much to offer other states. We suggest that it would be appropriate to hold an international conference in which CP can be presented alongside other successful initiatives.
- (2) There is a danger that, in searching to strengthen the core of what CP stands for, it might mimic aspects of the national agenda which standardise, rather than promote standards. It is important that CP avoids evaluative methods that seek to establish a single authoritative template for change, but rather uses the unique advantages and strengths of the 'CP brand' to create a shared vocabulary, promote the building of local and regional identities and to deepen understandings about creative pedagogies and creative school change. We suggest further development of a wider range of dissemination texts, including television documentaries, pod and vod casts and more conventional publishing.
- (3) There is an urgent need for a more systematic programme of national and regional CPD. This should focus on developing materials and programmes that are multi-disciplinary, and both pedagogical and leadership-oriented in order to
  - a. build the conceptual and practical repertoires of both creative agents and key staff in schools. In particular there is an urgent need for resources which assist school staff to bring together understandings of curriculum, teaching methods and assessment.
  - b. assist creative agents and teachers to 'read their settings' and diagnose what they are doing and where the gaps are,
  - c. build understandings of the multiple purposes of and strategies for student voice and participation,
  - d. challenge the discourse of deficit which continues to pervade many conversations about communities that work in deprived neighbourhoods
  - e. foster an assets based approach to parents, families and communities that recognises the knowledge and capacities that, potentially, they bring to education
- (4) CP is in a position to positively influence teacher education. It should work with the TDA and the GTCE in order to ensure that what is now known about creative pedagogies and school change becomes embedded in the preparation of the next generations of teachers.
- (5) CP has much to offer in relation to change leadership. It should initiate joint CPD with the National College for School Leadership, focusing on: capacity building; the management structures and modalities that produce change; the management of multiple and competing agendas; and a menu of approaches to involve teachers, parents and students.
- (6) CP has now placed considerable emphasis on and faith in the pivotal role of creative agents. It is vital that they are offered a rigorous national CPD programme which – without seeking an unproductive uniformity of approach - supports them to maintain critical challenge and orients their work to the analysis

of individual schools' starting points, change processes and the nature of partnerships.

- (7) There is a danger in national-regional-school 'delivery' models that feedback from the bottom to the top will be restricted and overly filtered. Greater emphasis on intra- and inter-programme communication will assist CP to obtain timely and accurate information and thus to continue to build its reform capacities.
- (8) CP has supported a unique and laudable national research programme. We urge that this should continue. In particular we suggest the possibility of studies which address
  - a. the pedagogies of close encounters with different kinds of artists and creative practitioners
  - b. the development of the visual and aesthetic in schools/spaces
  - c. the development of new learning spaces
  - d. the longer term effects of identifying as a 'creative' school
  - e. schools' capacities to identify and work with local 'funds of knowledge' accumulated by students, parents and communities.

## APPENDIX : SCHOOL SUMMARY TABLES

<b>CHESTNUT SECONDARY</b>	Comprehensive, not long out of special measures. Aspiring to be specialist performing arts
Context	New 'fix it' head, high staff turnover and illness. GCSE solution had been vocational education but now in national challenge. Head left for new job by the end of the research period, new head keen on CP.
Priorities for change	Focus on extra-curricular, regular rituals, based in popular youth and digital cultures, everyday lives and local issues (including urban regeneration). Aim to change local reputation, and to work with other schools.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Symbolic affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing what counts as learning. Changing the school culture. Moved midway to focus on directly on creative learning.
Creative approach	Linking creative practices to youth culture and creative industries
CP engagement	Strong creative agent led construction of stories of success and possibility. Students became more engaged. Some interesting examples of youth led events and materials. Challenge to get approach into mainstream curriculum.
Creative Agent	Manager/developer type. Project managing a range of initiatives; supporting teachers to improve their practice
Regional focus	Strategic orientation to local and regional regeneration
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches predominantly in extra curricular areas, some vocationally oriented mainstream
Student voice	Promotional and commercial
View of community	As resource to support inclusion and enterprise
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Energetic Creative Agent and Assistant Principal take CP lead and have most of the ideas. A little involvement by middle management. Staff keen supporters of events
Change modality	Side by side
Staff participation in decision making	No staff discussion of CP or its directions. Staff participation in annual review.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Staff encouraged to go to CPD events. Twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil free day. Emergent culture of professional inquiry. Some teacher reflection of CP events.
Reorientation	Strong emphasis on extra curricular activities which staff saw themselves as capable of running with some outside assistance. Some shift in vocational courses to reorientation with artefacts produced which used the life worlds of students as their basis. However the school senior leadership recognised that its challenge was to reorient mainstream curriculum and this was taken into account in planning.

<b>ELM PRIMARY</b>	Small, rural, middle class, 'good school'. Expanding from junior to primary, new buildings.
Context	New head. Some experienced staff taken aback by indifferent OfSTED report which demotivated them. New head left after three years and replacement head opted out of CP.
Priorities for change	Extend pedagogies, support cross curriculum work, enthuse staff. School also worked on pupil voice and personalised assessment of learning from early years up, separate from CP.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Symbolic, moving towards substantive affiliation, but then opted out.
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way pupils learn – a focus on creativity as teaching method. Later, changing the way learning is assessed – a focus on providing more creative means through which students can represent and demonstrate learning.
Creative approach	Focusing on teachers' understanding of creativity in their professional lives.
CP engagement	Projects to enhance staff skills, and to produce public 'product' which help form new school identity. Also cross- curriculum projects.
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Tactical orientation - school-focused and arts-based improvement in teaching and quality of learning
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches in mainstream curriculum
Student voice	Political (strongly representative) Therapeutic engagement in the arts
View of community	Community as potential but hard-to-reach partner in learning
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Staff in early years leading innovations across school as well as in their classrooms. All staff able to innovate. Innovative restructuring of promotion positions to widen SLT.
Change modality	Top down-bottom up
Staff participation in decision making	Staff meetings made decisions which then went to governing body. Head did not feel the need to take many decisions by herself.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	CPD plan for staff which included whole staff meetings, individual CPD planning. Whole staff pupil free days. Staff meeting used regularly for professional discussions.
Reorientation	Strong moves by some early years staff to re-orientation, particularly where staff had pre-existing complementary practice (design, music). Considerable documentation and some analysis of artefacts in all classes. Early years leading the way in tracking and profiling based on holistic documentation.

<b>HAZEL PRIMARY</b>	Successful inner-city school, now part of federation.
Context	History of engagement with arts organisations and creativity projects. Experience of large-scale projects, e.g. commissioned opera. Working on a long-term basis with academic researcher, around creativity issues.
Priorities for change	Develop integrated approach to curriculum planning – themed half-termly around particular topics. Reconfiguring classroom space through 'pods'. Creativity emphasised in INSET and induction.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Substantive affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way pupils learn, changing the way learning is organised
Creative approach	Collaborative performances
CP engagement	Creative practitioner involvement in reconfiguring of classroom space, and in larger-scale work (operas).
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: involvement through enabling links between schools and creative practitioners; a 'minor player' in regeneration, but seeing opportunities for a wider role: 'I think the challenge is: how can we use this programme to move into something else.'
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches in extra and mainstream curricula
Student voice	Self expression/identity building Therapeutic engagement in the arts Heritage: story-telling, drama & opera built on community stories Dialogic with family (child responsible for explaining information to parents)
View of community	Community as assets rich
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Advanced skills teachers with strong creativity brief.
Change modality	Side by side, though with strong directive element
Staff participation in decision making	Staff involved in elaboration of 'vision' and strategy.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Strong arrangements for induction of new staff. Head's recruitment policy focused on creative capacities of applicants. Staff encouraged to develop their interest in creativity research and practice.
Reorientation	Strong emphasis on induction of new staff to 'creativity'-based approaches – 'NQTs have to be retrained'. Encouragement given to research visits by some staff, and creativity researcher linked to the school. New role of 'professional development teacher' established.

<b>JUNIPER PRIMARY</b>	Inner city school, socially mixed intake.
Context	History of work with various arts organisations, emphasis on the visual. Strong relationship to resident artist; artist's atelier in the middle of the school. But in process of moving to a new building.
Priorities for change	Centred on the move to the new building. Some other things on hold, or scaled down, e.g. in relation to resident artist.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Symbolic affiliation, moving back to affiliative
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way pupils learn
Creative approach	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time
CP engagement	All year groups involved with CP arts-focused projects but some sense among teachers that CP changed and there was a greater CP concern for reports and evaluation.
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: modest initiatives to improve teacher capacity and develop arts-based learning.
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches in aspects of the mainstream curriculum.
Student voice	Therapeutic engagement in the arts Aesthetic: arts criticism and interpretation
View of community	As community of difference, with which to be in dialogue
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Headteacher commitment, plus a number of individual staff.
Change modality	Top down, bottom up
Staff participation in decision making	(Acknowledged) uneven staff involvement in development of creativity-related work.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Opportunities for individual staff to pursue creativity-related learning. Staff involved in links of several kinds to arts-related creative practice in the city.
Reorientation	Staff development in and through drama is an important feature, enabled by contact with university-based researchers and practitioners. Emphasis also on learning through community links about (e.g.) capacities of parents and what they can bring to the school. HT emphasizes that these are continuations of pre-CP themes.

<b>MIMOSA NURSERY</b>	Located in high poverty suburban estate in city
Context	Relatively new head with community arts background, formerly deputy and CP lead in school. Restricted CPD opportunities locally. Judged by OfSTED to be a 'good school'
Priorities for change	Develop early years pedagogies. Generate staff development opportunities.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Substantive affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way learning is assessed. Changing what counts as learning, changing who teaches
Creative approach	Employ artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods of time; focus on teachers' understandings of creativity
CP engagement	Sustained work with artist who became creative agent and a governor. Staff exploration of assessment, play and drawing. Enthusiastic accessing of CPD nationally and also internationally; development of school-based programme of CPD for local schools and LAs.
Creative Agent	Consultant type. Improving teachers' creative practice; developing networks; sharing good practice
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: school-focused rethinking of teaching and learning, rendering the school a regional hub/beacon for CPD locally.
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Exploratory pedagogy combined with creative approaches
Student voice	Self expression/identity building
View of community	As potential but hard-to-reach partner in learning
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Committed head and CA (who was also a governor and participating artist)
Change modality	Side by side
Staff participation in decision making	Emphasis on whole staff involvement
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Whole staff CPD. Individuals encouraged to attend conferences and take up CPD opportunities, including, for eg, specialist Forest School training. School provided CPD programme for local teachers and LA; keen to develop this further.
Reorientation	Strong emphasis on analysis of artefacts and pedagogies amongst teaching staff. Complementarity between teaching staff and artists not strongly developed at the level of pedagogy; artist/head teacher relationship seen as complementary and key to the strategic development of the school.

<b>MULBERRY PRIMARY</b>	Medium sized primary with 99% EAL and in deprived urban locality
Context	Experienced head encouraged work with nationally recognised expert in drama. Good long-term relations with community organisations. School on Ofsted 'notice to improve'. Head retired and new head opted out of CP also abandoning drama work in favour of school improvement approaches.
Priorities for change	Strong emphasis on building religious and cultural understandings. Wanted to develop drama into specialisation while consolidating process-based drama approaches.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Unable to affiliate
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the ways pupils learn
Creative approach	Struggled to find a way to engage but did focus on developing teachers' understandings of creativity as teaching method.
CP engagement	CP unable to offer what school wanted at first but then supported drama work.
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Strategic orientation: community cohesion
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches in extra and mainstream curricula
Student voice	Self expression/identity building; political – campaigning; therapeutic – drama; negotiation – peer mediation; cultural heritage - story-telling and drama built on community stories; cultural knowledge - walking to music, exploration of diverse literatures & art forms.
View of community	As community of difference, with which to be in dialogue
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Strong head teacher commitment; change in head lessened whole-school interest in 'creativity' projects.
Change modality	Side by side
Staff participation in decision making	Emphasis on whole staff involvement
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Recruitment focus on people who are 'willing to try new things' [HT]. Opportunities for staff involvement with external researchers and practitioners, especially through drama but also through process of sustained reflection, supported e.g. by LEA resources, on issues of ethnicity and community.
Reorientation	Teacher development in Foundation Stage assisted by – e.g. visit to Reggio Emilia – but such approaches not generalized across school. Moves towards creativity induction for all staff, involving CP, but not realized at time of visits. Teacher learning through involvement with creative practitioners. HT emphasises that these are continuations of pre-CP themes.

<b>OAK TREE PRIMARY</b>	Large inner city multicultural primary
Context	New head. Ofsted 'notice to improve' Staff fragmented.
Priorities for change	Need to become 'whole school', enthuse staff and students, work on relationships, establish common language about learning/teaching, engage and motivate pupils
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Substantive affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing school organisation; changing the school culture.
Creative approach	Focus on teachers' understanding of creativity
CP engagement	Work on space and aesthetic environment of school led by artists. Analysis of classroom environment led to change in setting by ability. Developing interest in the aesthetic and in international alternatives to school's modes of organisation
Creative Agent	Community member type: planning, brokering partnerships.
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: school-focused improvement in teaching and quality of learning
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches primarily to learning environments and extra curricular activity
Student voice	Consumer – surveys Political – delegated school council Academic – think tank on literacy
View of community	As potential but hard-to-reach partner in learning
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Head supported and supported by CP Co-ordinator and cadre of Think Tank staff. CA strongly committed to school development.
Change modality	Top down, bottom up
Staff participation in decision making	Emphasis on whole staff involvement in final decision making.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Whole staff CPD events; extra opportunities for related learning in conjunction with CA. Developing culture of professional inquiry: Think Tank encouraged to take up and develop issues which were then put to whole staff.
Reorientation	Artist led analysis of artefacts, taken up with increasing confidence by teaching staff. Reflection on pedagogies led by subgroup of staff, drawing on artists' feedback, with input from CA. Careful respect for complementarity of roles but working relationship not an equal one (artists are visitors doing project work in the school).

<b>PLUMTREE COLLEGE</b>	Secondary comprehensive serving deprived estate plus older more established middle class community. Poor building stock
Context	New head. Pressure from LA to lift results. Pointed OFSTED which emphasised better target setting. Poor local reputation. Keen support from small group of staff including new Assistant Principal but CP projects not followed through and school opted out of CP as LA involved them in school improvement project.
Priorities for change	Improve local reputation. Improve results.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Affiliative but opted out
Starting points for CP related change	Changing school culture, changing the way pupils learn
Creative approach	Big collaborative productions
CP engagement	CP supported student voice, student filmmaking, photography exhibitions, local newspaper. These all raised positive public profile. Largely offered as Gifted and Talented programme and supplementary to mainstream curriculum. CP sat alongside official school improvement which focused on target setting in every lesson and strong performance management regime. Streaming introduced into Year 8.
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: contributing to school improvement through a variety of 'creative' approaches, including pupil voice.
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches in extra curricular activities and gifted and talented enhancement
Student voice	Consumer – focus groups Self expression/identity building Political – campaigning Argument Negotiation – staff/student Academic - student research (eg lesson observation and analysis) Dialogic – community blog
View of community	As deficit
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	CP led by AP who was keen to extend student voice to students evaluating staff. Some teachers involved in projects.
Change modality	Top down
Staff participation in decision making	SLT decision making
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Some twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil free day Staff could access out of school CPD. No staff inquiry projects
Reorientation	No analysis of artefacts and pedagogies across school. Creative practitioners seen as having skills separate from teachers'.

<b>ROWAN NURSERY AND INFANTS</b>	Small school in high poverty suburban estate.
Context	Experienced head, stable staff, clear philosophy of teaching/learning, strong relationships with local community. Possibility of amalgamation with nearby junior school. Ofsted 'good school'
Priorities for change	Extend early childhood pedagogies. Develop arts curriculum.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Substantive affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way pupils learn, changing what counts as learning, changing who teaches
Creative approach	Employing artists to work alongside teachers for sustained periods
CP engagement	Aimed to increase number of adults working in pedagogical roles with children to include artists and thus broaden learning and experiences. Rejected teacher apprenticeship CPD model of working with artists.
Creative Agent	Community member type, focused on evaluation.
Regional focus	Tactical orientation: school-focused and arts-based improvement in teaching and quality of learning
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Exploratory, negotiated and creative approaches
Student voice	Self expression/identity building Therapeutic engagement in arts Academic - collaborative evaluation through discussion and negotiated curriculum
View of community	As assets rich
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Strong bonds between more experienced staff, including head, and strong commitment to bringing newer staff into school community.
Change modality	Devolved
Staff participation in decision making	Emphasis on whole staff involvement (including artists)
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Emphasis on learning together within and about the school community. Opportunities for systematic analysis and reflection built in to school schedule. Strong culture of professional inquiry and developed beyond traditional CPD offering, eg attendance at Appleby Horse Fair to better understand traveller families' issues.
Reorientation	Detailed analysis of artefacts and pedagogies across whole staff including support staff. Full complementarity between teachers and artists.

<b>SILVER BIRCH HIGH</b>	Catholic secondary school (non-grammar) in area with selective secondary system Specialist Arts College.
Context	Small secondary school. Explicit sense of school tradition and values.
Priorities for change	Develop stronger multi-cultural awareness and 'creative' pedagogies and approaches in particular subject areas.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Symbolic affiliation
Starting points for CP related change	Changing school culture.
Creative approach	Multiple projects focusing on teachers' understanding of possibilities opened up by creative approaches
CP engagement	CP-related work arts focussed. No large-scale project. CP ran half-day INSET on creative teaching and learning. Creative practitioners worked in a number of subject areas – e.g. geography, history, music.
Creative Agent	Manager type, project managing to ensure that decisions are taken and implemented properly.
Regional focus	Strategic orientation to local and regional regeneration
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative approaches predominantly but not exclusively in extra curricular activities
Student voice	Aesthetic - arts criticism and interpretation Promotional – video diaries
View of community	From a pastoral perspective, recognising diversity
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Head teacher not involved at level of detail. Teachers encouraged to develop projects, while SMT focus is on funding, specialist school status etc.
Change modality	Side by side
Staff participation in decision making	At project, rather than whole-school, level.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Learning is individualised, rather than collective. Staff learning is specific to particular projects, rather than generalised across the field of creativity.
Reorientation	Large-scale transformation not the objective. CP is about developing teachers' understanding of 'creative learning' and how to incorporate creative teaching in lessons – 'gently creating an atmosphere' (DH). Teachers learn through doing and from contact with practitioners rather than through formal CPD activity.

<b>SYCAMORE COMPREHENSIVE</b>	Medium sized specialist business and enterprise college located in middle class area but serving nearby estate. Comprehensive in grammar school system.
Context	New head. High staff turnover, declining enrolment. Pushing for academy status and federation. Concerned for local reputation, staff morale. Strong partnership with national hotel chain. Implementing performance management as QA. National challenge school. Strong narrative of school as serious risk takers. Challenge to spread and embed pockets of innovation.
Priorities for change	Support and develop enterprise and risk taking. Improve reputation and results.
<b>CREATIVE PARTNERSHIPS</b>	Affiliative
Starting points for CP related change	Changing the way learning is organised; changing what counts as learning; changing school culture
Creative approach	Linking creativity, enterprise and entrepreneurialism
CP engagement	Strong PR focus. Support for enterprise and to develop new Year 7 curriculum with creative thinking skills at core. Pupil voice initiatives, including pupils as researchers and as junior entrepreneurs. Some changes to physical infrastructure.
Creative Agent	
Regional focus	Strategic orientation: local and regional regeneration
<b>PEDAGOGICAL APPROACH</b>	Creative skills, creative approaches in extra curricular and vocational specialism
Student voice	Political – delegated Promotional and commercial
View of community	As resource to support enterprise
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	Creativity middle management post created; middle management involved in discussions about creativity agenda in school and how performance management might assist in institutionalising it
Change modality	Top down
Staff participation in decision making	Staff meetings consultation on CP. Major initiative in Year 7 had staff agreement, as did its review.
<b>TEACHER LEARNING</b>	Some twilight sessions. Whole staff pupil-free days on CP programmes. Staff could access out of school CPD. No staff inquiry but student led inquiry projects regular feature of school and used to review CP.
Reorientation	Creative practitioners seen as having separate skills, some of which teachers could acquire. No analysis of artefacts or pedagogies. Particular staff seen as highly competent to undertake student research projects.

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## End Notes

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<sup>i</sup> The interim report is available on our website <http://www.creativeschoolchange.org.uk>

<sup>ii</sup> Our view is that 'change' is not transferable in any simple kind of way. But important questions which arise from examining commonalities across schools as well as interesting principles about ways of working can be drawn from reform stories (Warren Little, 1996).

<sup>iii</sup> The interim report was a report of the snapshot phase – the final report is a close examination of the case study schools. We also refer back to the interim report at key points of comparison.

<sup>iv</sup> Throughout this report we therefore include Alder College and Blackthorn where we have sufficient evidence and omit them elsewhere.

<sup>v</sup> The standards approach is often equated with high degrees of command and control steerage from above, although this is not always the case. Creativity approaches on the other hand require looser governance and seek to harness the innovative and adaptive capacities of local schools and teachers on the assumption that this 'bottom up' approach will continue to raise standards as well as deliver 'new economy' outcomes (self-managing workers, entrepreneurs and scientific and technological innovations).

<sup>vi</sup> China too is keen to become 'more creative' (Chinese economy needs 'huge' investment in student talent. THE, 4-10 June, pp18-19)

<sup>vii</sup> Recent investment in Masters programmes for teachers is further evidence of this shift to harnessing professional know how to the twin tasks of standards and creativity.

<sup>viii</sup> ECM focuses on children whose life circumstances prevent them from achieving. It thus addresses the standards agenda through provision of more coordinated health and welfare support. Similarly, 'personalisation' addresses achievement problems created by whole class teaching which fails to take on board specific individual differences, needs, interests and talents.

<sup>ix</sup> The ways in which particularities are produced both within and without education policy are not widely researched or understood ( but see Lupton, 2004; Thomson, 2002, 2008; Thrupp, 1999) although there is general agreement that context matters (e.g. Harris, James, Gunraj, Clarke, & Harris, 2006; Macbeath et al., 2007).

<sup>x</sup> While we have spoken of schools here as if they speak with one voice, that is of course not the case. Each school also contains a mix of narratives, needs, opinions and interests.

<sup>xi</sup> The new CP arrangement - for all inquiry and change schools to access a creative agent and for national schools of creativity to have both a creative agent and a critical friend - is intended to address the need for continued challenge.

<sup>xii</sup> In line with other current research studies, we suggest that change is not linear but is layered with one set of activities piled up after another. Sometimes there is an order to the layering. In challenging schools it is often necessary to establish good social order and management routines at the outset before other activities can take place. However in these schools, social order routines and management systems also have to be regularly revisited and revised.

<sup>xiii</sup> It is not surprising that these are both now national Schools of Creativity.

<sup>xiv</sup> This was one of the points we made strongly in the interim report. We saw in the snapshot phase schools with a distinct lack of intellectual resources with which to deconstruct dominant and develop possible new approaches to teaching/learning.

<sup>xv</sup> As is the case for example in some of the national and international Learning to Learning programmes.

<sup>xvi</sup> Sometimes also called goal based assessment.

<sup>xvii</sup> It is however exercised as a whole school approach in some of the Schools of Creativity and is included here because it is a feature of CP work.

<sup>xviii</sup> We have cited as examples case study schools, but there are also others in the wider corpus and our experience in talking to CP schools in CPD events is that these tensions are relatively widespread.

<sup>xix</sup> It is not surprising that there are many CP schools in these categories since CP in its first phase deliberately sought to work in schools in designated deprived areas where there are higher numbers of such schools

<sup>xx</sup> At the time of the research the Schools of Creativity had not yet morphed into an A+ network form, although they clearly have the potential to do so if they are provided with appropriate support and leadership.

<sup>xxi</sup> We know from anecdotal evidence that some of the new reformed CP regional organisations are taking alignment with LA seriously.