'How can Thomas Tallis School use the demolishing and rebuilding of the school buildings and the surrounding housing estate to develop and embed creative learning across a) the school staff b) the students c) other local primary and secondary schools and d) the community?'
Developing Practice: transforming our school

The Creativity Action Research Group

The Group continues to meet fortnightly to discuss strategy with regard to our SoC status. We have recruited new staff and student members. The blog is regularly updated with minutes of meetings and a variety of contributions relating to the promotion of creative learning. In addition, the group advises on the content of the Creative Tallis website, designed to present a coherent view of our approach to creative learning, a list of web 2.0 resources and examples of good practice. Recent discussions have been focused on the creation of a Student Commissioning Group. The purpose of this group would be to act as clients for future interventions by creative practitioners. We have experience of using the model established by the Sorrell Foundation and keen to hand over responsibility for the curation of a series of creative interventions by a range of artists to the students. They will generate ideas, write a project brief, advertise for a practitioner or group, interview and commission them, manage the project and evaluate its impact. Funds will be made available from our School of Creativity grant and projects must support one or more of the aims of the school’s development plan. The group will be supported by the Creative Tallis ARG, our Creative Agent, John Riches, and our artist in residence, Mike Shaw. We will invite the nominees for this year’s Josh Beasley Award for Creativity (see below), in the first instance, to be members of the new commissioning group. Additional members may then need to be sought through an application process.

The Josh Beasley Award for Creativity

There were a larger number of entries for this year’s award, representing a wider range of ages and talents. The award exists to honour the memory of Josh Beasley, a student from Tallis who tragically died two years ago and also to recognise and support students’ creativity. Three prizes were awarded, one in the 11-14 age range and two in the 14-19 age range. The quality of the entries was astounding and judging them was a time-consuming and difficult task. The winners are yet to be formally announced. They receive a cash prize which must be used to develop their talent and provide support for creative learning in school, plus a small statuette created by the sculptor John Frankland.

The Senior Staff Creativity Group

The Senior and Middle Leaders Group (SSC) has been reorganised this year into focused action research groups. One of these has been given responsibility for the creative learning agenda and is now working
closely with the Creative Tallis ARG. We have held one joint meeting to establish a close partnership and two ideas have emerged:

1. A teacher exchange programme designed to encourage inter-disciplinary professional development. The format is inspired equally by the “Faking It!” television show and a previous project in collaboration with the Helen Storey Foundation. We have identified a number of staff who are willing to engage in exchanges. Our intention is to make a video documentary of the learning process in each case. These films will then be used to encourage other partnerships this year and next as part of an ongoing programme of investigations into the impact of inter-disciplinary ways of working.

2. The design of an APP style framework for assessing creative learning across the school (see Appendix 1 for a copy of the current draft proposal). We are hopeful that, once this document has been refined, that we can trial its use in at least one curriculum area to test its usefulness. Our hypothesis is that the framework will have several impacts:

   • Students will gain a better understanding of the skills and aptitudes necessary to be effective as creative learners
   • Colleagues will be able to plan learning activities to specifically create capacity for enhanced creative learning
   • Colleagues who have used and helped to refine the framework will become advocates for its usefulness in the holistic assessment of students’ learning abilities
   • Colleagues from across the school will be better equipped to assess and evaluate the impact of creative learning in their curriculum area
   • Parents and carers will have a better understanding of the link between creative learning and attainment as well as a clearer idea of the impact of School of Creativity status

**Tallis Lab**

Having taken the decision to remove discrete ICT lessons from the Year 8 and 9 curriculum and replace them with a new subject called Tallis Lab, we are in the process of developing the content of the lessons and evaluating the impact of this new enquiry based learning approach. The Tallis Lab curriculum is underpinned by the notion of an enquiry cycle, popularised by Futurelab’s Enquiring Minds. John Riches, our Creative Agent, is engaged in helping us to evaluate the impact of this approach to learning through a series of interviews with students during Tallis Lab lessons. We have created a website and blog to share both the approach we are trialling and the resources we create.

The impacts we have noticed so far include:

- students more actively engaged in the co-creation of learning through the Make it better project.
- students developing an explicit understanding of eSafety through the use of Web 2.0 and social networking tools
- students able to collaborate more effectively both in class and online
- students enjoying opportunities to use ICT to create engaging products with a clear sense of audience
• students developing a sense of pride in their work through publishing content to the WWW
• colleagues actively engaged in creating a curriculum that is challenging and that requires them to share skills and experiences has a very positive impact on CPD
The development of the Tallis Lab curriculum is led by Soren Hawes, our Creative Learning Co-ordinator.

Curriculum Redesign at Key Stage 3

We are actively engaged in the process of redesigning the curriculum at KS3. This work is co-ordinated by the Future Foundations Group, a team of senior and middle leaders including the school’s ASTs. All curriculum areas have submitted year plans for 7 and 8 and detailed schemes of work for the first two terms of year 7. These include:

• specific reference to Creative Thinking as a PLTS
• specific reference to Creativity as a cross-curriculum dimension
• specific reference to each of the three themes chosen by the school to encourage the transfer of learning across the curriculum. These are:
  1. Discovery & Play (Autumn Term)
  2. Connections (Spring Term)
  3. Perspectives (Summer Term)

A feature of this thematic approach is the creation of cross-curriculum learning events. The first of these took place in April last year linked to the Spring Term theme of Connections and encouraged Year 7 students to reflect on their learning with a specific focus on healthy lifestyles. An important feature of this event was the degree of choice students had, not only in which activities they selected, but in the length of each activity. Students could select activities that lasted a whole day (e.g. creating a documentary of the whole event working alongside a professional film maker) or a wide variety of one or two hour sessions.

Bring It Back Please - LOUIE
I had fun cooking. I wanna do it again - SARA MARTINELLI
I joined the media team. Amazing joyful happy day. It was very educational. Thank you
Media team - NADEEM ISLAM
I thought that the year 7 cross curricular learning day was good and definitely better then a normal school and I really enjoyed the lessons that we had and we all had a great time :) - HARRY SMALL

In Summer 2009 we co-ordinated a further cross-curriculum event. This time we engaged the whole school, creating 52 vertically grouped Olympic country teams whose task over two half days and one full day of activity was to generate a bid to host the 2016 Games. This ambitious event had very positive outcomes for both staff and students and the feedback we have received demonstrates the value of this kind of learning for the majority of participants. This term, we are creating two days of activities for the whole school centred on a better understanding of the issues surrounding Fair Trade. One of the issues facing the school is how to embed this kind of approach and develop sufficient capacity amongst more members of staff to become part of the organising committee.
Influencing Practice: transforming other schools

Online collaboration

We have been actively involved in a variety of collaborations with colleagues from schools across the country via our websites and learning networks. Our approach has been promoted on a variety of blogs including that of Johannes Ahrenfelt and Neil Watkin and Sally Fort.

We have recently been invited by a colleague in South Wales to contribute to his new school development blog. We believe that these connections can only enrich our own understanding of creative learning with a particular focus on the use of digital technologies. We have recently developed and published our own iPhone and Android phone apps. These are freely available online via iTunes and the Android marketplace. The purpose of the apps is to communicate the latest school news, publicise the various learning blogs managed by students and colleagues and highlight good practice. We believe we are the only secondary school in the country with our own app and we have received a very positive reaction online.
Community Cohesion

We have worked very closely with a variety of schools and community groups in order to support community cohesion and share the benefits of our School of Creativity status. Some of our work in this area is detailed in our Creative Communities Annual Report for 2009. We are delighted with the incredibly positive impact of our Creative Communities Development Officer and feel that investing in a post such as this has been an essential feature of the quality and range of creative learning activities we have co-ordinated with our partners. Recent highlights have included the annual Tree Dressing Celebrations on the local housing estate that involved co-ordinating the contributions of a wide range of partners including faith groups, a drop-in centre for local youths, a Food Co-operative, the LEA, a local community college, a housing association and local residents. Further evidence of our impact on community cohesion can be found in the recent Ofsted report for Horn Park School which identifies the positive effects of our partnership projects.

The Creative Learning Project

We have established an innovative partnership with the Greenwich CLCs designed to provide local primary schools with targeted interventions focused on the creative use of ICT. This Creative Learning Project is due to start in March with Horn Park and Henwick Schools. The project has several key aims:

- to enhance continuing professional development in our partner primary schools
- to enhance students’ digital literacy
- to develop sustainable projects, using an imaginative approach to ICT, that develop key skills
- to have a positive impact on student engagement in and enjoyment of learning
- to create a legacy of approaches, techniques and processes that can be used by others
- to help raise standards across the curriculum

Student Voice

The Creative Tallis ARG was recently invited to give a keynote presentation to a group of 50 headteachers and arts professionals at City Hall on the subject of Student Voice. The specific theme of our talk was the impact of using web tools on collaboration, strategic influence in school and the co-creation of the curriculum. We received very positive feedback from both attendees and the organisers, A New Direction. We are hosting a visit by Islington Arts and Media School on Tuesday 2nd March. Their student arts leaders are keen to find out how we have used a variety of online tools to promote creative learning at Tallis and we, in turn, are eager to discover how they took part in the evaluation of creative learning in class. This promises to be a very fruitful collaboration between two London Schools of Creativity.
International Links

For the last three years we have hosted a visit by a group of Danish teachers interested in our use of new technologies to promote creative learning. This year, we were also joined by a smaller team of teachers from Sweden. Responses to both these visits from our visitors have been extremely positive. One immediate impact is that we are hosting another visit from a group of 20 Danish students on 23rd March. We are planning to establish a close link with this group so that we can continue to collaborate with the students and staff of the Vordingborg Gymnasium. We are contemplating a return visit to Scandinavia this year with students from the ARG.

We have also just begun an online collaboration with the Royal Dubai School in Dubai. The focus of this exchange will be to develop the literacy skills of Year 7 students through a collaborative blogging project.

We are currently reviewing our international links in the context of specialist status and community cohesion. One area identified for further development is the potential for more links with Africa and South America through the Fair Trade agenda.

Our links with the A+ network of schools in Oklahoma is detailed below.

Creative approaches to learning for students with special educational needs

We have been invited by the School of Education at the University of Nottingham to contribute a chapter to a new publication about creative learning. The focus of this chapter will be the creative use of new technologies to engage students with special educational needs, specifically students in the Deaf Support Centre at Tallis.
The Creative Tallis ARG have been invited to make a collaborative keynote presentation at this year’s World Creativity Forum in Oklahoma, USA. Three schools (one secondary, one primary and one special school) from London will be directly involved in the conference, supported by A New Direction. Prior to the visit in November 2010 we will host a visit in June by young people and their teachers from Oklahoma who are involved in the A+ network. We will also be engaging in a virtual conversation about learning in the lead up to both events. We have set up a Ning social network called OK LDN for this purpose.

We have been fascinated by the A+ scheme for some time and this will be a fantastic opportunity to assess its impact on system change in a very different context. We are particularly interested in the role that the arts have at the heart of the curriculum as catalysts for creative learning and the value of developing a range of subtle evaluation strategies to capture the impact of creative learning on progress and attainment.
The following document is a draft version of a proposed Assessment Framework for Creative Learning created by the SSC Creativity Group at Thomas Tallis School.

### Appendix 1: APP for Creative Learning

The following document is a draft version of a proposed Assessment Framework for Creative Learning created by the SSC Creativity Group at Thomas Tallis School.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Tutor Group</th>
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#### AF1 Thinking Creatively

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<th>Level</th>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Students are intuitive and use their imaginations expertly to generate sophisticated, original and innovative ideas. They can use metaphor and analogy to link apparently contradictory ideas together. They can entertain difference and are able to synthesise a range of evidence. This often enables them to make conceptual leaps in understanding. They can see ‘the big picture’ and have the ability to filter and select useful information.</td>
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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Students have developed mastery of the domain specific knowledge related to a wide range of tasks. They naturally adopt an enquiry-based approach to learning and make clear connections between their learning in and outside school. They can quickly gain and assimilate new knowledge. They can use this to form new ideas and concepts. They have excellent research skills. They can apply their knowledge in a range of contexts and transfer learning across domains in order to solve problems. They take full ownership of the process of developing their already considerable skills.</td>
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#### AF3 Communicating Effectively

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<td>Students are able to present their ideas with considerable flair. They can use language to describe, discuss, explain, persuade and debate. They have extremely mature speaking and listening skills. They can work very effectively, either individually or as part of a group. They can play a variety of roles to facilitate others’ learning. Their excellent interpersonal skills enable them to build teams and they invariably display leadership qualities. They are fully aware of their audience and able to select appropriate tools and media to communicate imaginatively with them. They understand and exploit the relationship between form and content in the production of a creative solution.</td>
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#### AF4 Developing Flexibility & Resilience

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<td><strong>8</strong></td>
<td>Students are open to new ideas and able to reflect on the progress of their work in order to refine them. They can work very effectively within given constraints and react very positively when faced with serious setbacks. They enjoy a very high level of challenge and entertain risk. They are highly motivated. They can maintain focus at all times and have a clear sense of purpose in their work. They are highly responsive to audience feedback and able to evaluate ideas by referring to learning networks in and outside school. They frequently display absorption, excitement and a very high level of enjoyment in their learning.</td>
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Students are intuitive and confident in using their imaginations to generate intelligent and original ideas. They can link ideas together and synthesise a range of evidence. They can see ‘the big picture’ and have the ability to filter and select useful information.

Students are developing their ability to think intuitively and are increasingly confident in using their imaginations to generate original ideas. They can often link ideas together and synthesise a range of evidence. They can see ‘the big picture’ and have an increasing ability to filter and select useful information.

Students are developing good domain specific knowledge in relation to a particular task. They sometimes adopt an enquiry-based approach to learning and can make connections between their learning in and outside school. They can gain and use new knowledge. They have some effective research skills. They can apply their knowledge in a range of contexts and transfer learning across domains.

Students are increasingly effective in using their imaginations to generate original ideas. They can sometimes link ideas together. They can sometimes see ‘the big picture’ and have a developing ability to filter and select useful information.

Students have very good grasp of the domain specific knowledge related to particular tasks. They often employ an enquiry-based approach to learning and frequently make connections between their learning in and outside school. They are able gain and use new knowledge with increased fluency and sometimes use this to form new ideas and concepts. They are developing effective research skills. They are increasingly able to apply their knowledge in a range of contexts and transfer learning across domains in order to solve problems.

Students are developing good domain specific knowledge in relation to a particular task. They sometimes adopt an enquiry-based approach to learning and can make connections between their learning in and outside school. They can gain and use new knowledge. They have some effective research skills. They can apply their knowledge in a range of contexts and transfer learning across domains.

Students are developing the ability to construct more complex presentations. They can use descriptive language with control. They are sometimes able to discuss what they have learned. They have developed a range of effective speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate an awareness of their audience and an increasing ability to communicate effectively with them using more sophisticated tools.

Students have very good grasp of the domain specific knowledge related to particular tasks. They often employ an enquiry-based approach to learning and frequently make connections between their learning in and outside school. They are able gain and use new knowledge with increased fluency and sometimes use this to form new ideas and concepts. They are developing effective research skills. They are sometimes able to apply their knowledge in a range of contexts and transfer learning across domains in order to solve problems.

Students are able to present their ideas with confidence. They can use language to describe, discuss and explain. They have very good speaking and listening skills. They can work effectively, either individually or as part of a group. They can play a variety of learning roles with increasing confidence. Their interpersonal skills enable them to support team building and they sometimes display leadership qualities. They are very often aware of their audience and able to select appropriate tools and media to communicate effectively with them.

Students are increasingly open to new ideas and sometimes able to reflect on their progress in order to refine them. They can work within given constraints and cope relatively well when faced with serious setbacks. They enjoy a high level of challenge and entertain risk. They are well motivated. They can concentrate on tasks and maintain a strong sense of purpose in their work. They are usually responsive to audience feedback and able to test the value of ideas by referring to learning networks in and outside school. They can express excitement and enjoyment in their learning.
Students can use their imaginations to generate interesting ideas. They can occasionally see connections between ideas. They show some ability in being able to select useful information.

Students can acquire new domain specific knowledge and apply prior knowledge with increasing confidence. They have developed rudimentary research skills.

Students can take a significant role in making increasingly complex presentations. They can use descriptive language with control. They are developing a range of effective speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate a growing awareness of their audience and an ability to communicate effectively with them using simple tools.

Students have developed a degree of resilience in the face of more serious setbacks. They are usually well motivated and can maintain focus for longer periods of time. They tend to enjoy their learning.

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<td>Students can use their imaginations to generate simple ideas. They can make straightforward connections between ideas.</td>
<td>Students can acquire new knowledge and apply prior knowledge with growing confidence.</td>
<td>Students can take a more significant role in making simple presentations using particular media. They can use descriptive language. They are developing effective speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate a growing awareness of their audience.</td>
<td>Students are developing resilience in the face of setbacks. They are generally well motivated and can maintain focus for limited periods of time.</td>
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<td>Students can use their imaginations to generate simple ideas. They can make straightforward connections between ideas.</td>
<td>Students can acquire new knowledge and apply prior knowledge to a basic level.</td>
<td>Students can contribute to simple presentations. They can use descriptive language. They have basic speaking and listening skills. They demonstrate some awareness of their audience.</td>
<td>Students are developing resilience in the face of small setbacks. They are generally well motivated and can maintain focus for limited periods of time.</td>
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**Targets**

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School of Creativity Report - March 2010