



## The Impact of Creative Partnerships

*“Young people known to have attended Creative Partnerships activities outperformed those in the same schools who had not by a statistically significant margin at all three stages (Key Stages 2, 3 and 4)”*

*National Foundation for Educational Research, February 2006*

Since our launch in 2002, we have built up a body of research about our work, ranging from a national evaluation by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) which involved questionnaires and interviews with teachers and creative professionals throughout the country, to individual evaluations of specific projects undertaken by education and research professionals. These provide more detailed, nuanced reports of particular impacts on young people and their schools, complementing the broader statistical sweep.

The information in this document draws on the NFER evaluation of the pilot phase of Creative Partnerships and their tracking of 13,000 students who have participated in Creative Partnerships projects, individual project research documents, early longitudinal studies from the first cohort of Creative Partnerships and recent research conducted by specialist research agency BMRB (British Market Research Bureau).

Research activity is of course ongoing and continually being added to but work to date has shown that Creative Partnerships projects have produced substantial impacts both on children and young people, and on teachers and indeed schools.

### **Impact on children and young people**

Anecdotal and statistical evidence of Creative Partnerships' impact on students can be summarised under the following headings:

- Improvement in motivation and attitudes to learning
- Increases in academic achievement
- Skills development

### **Impact on teachers and schools**

All participants in Creative Partnerships projects, including teachers, are encouraged to approach projects as learners themselves. As a result, a wealth of evidence is also emerging, demonstrating our impact on:

- Teachers and their teaching practice
- Headteachers' attitudes and aspirations
- Organisational changes in schools

## **IMPACTS ON CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**

### **1) Motivation and attitudes to learning**

Motivation and attitude are key to learning but are often inhibited by low levels of confidence and self-esteem. Measurements of increased confidence therefore become important indicators of success.

In projects throughout the country, we have seen students' participation in Creative Partnerships projects increase their confidence and self-esteem, with the concomitant positive effect on motivation.

Recent research among headteachers whose schools have been working intensively with Creative Partnerships for more than two years showed 92% had perceived an improvement in students' confidence and 87% reported an improvement in pupils' motivation.

Earlier research undertaken by Creative Partnerships Kent among teachers revealed their assessment that:

- 71% of primary school children taking part in Creative Partnerships projects have demonstrated positive change in their levels of confidence, with 43% of them demonstrating radical change
- The same study shows students across primary and secondary schools showing a 33% radical improvement in confidence from the teachers' perspective and a 40% improvement according to their own assessment.

These statistics are reinforced by NFER-led interviews with parents and school governors which reported a perceived improvement in

- confidence
- self-esteem
- imagination and
- communication

All of these are contributory factors in improvements in standards.

At a more global level, research among teachers closely involved with Creative Partnerships across the country revealed that:

- approximately 80% believed Creative Partnerships had improved their ability as a school to help young people have positive aspirations for the future.

In secondary schools, improvements in motivation can be attributed in part to working in creative areas (eg music, film production, dance) that young people perceive as having relevance to their lives. Significant features of this type of work are that:

- Students feel ownership of these projects and increase their efforts because the final outcome of the project is of intrinsic value to them rather than being an imposed target
- Working with professionals from the outside world places different demands on students: they are expected to display certain standards of professionalism, commitment and discipline in their working and are inspired to do so by their contact with role-models – adults who are successfully following careers in for example, music journalism or computer game software design that have an immediate appeal to many young people.

It has been frequently observed that the motivational increases that result from involvement in these projects extend into other areas of learning and beyond the duration of specific projects.

This has been borne out in research by Creative Partnerships Merseyside for example which reports:

- Students demonstrating positive attitudes towards peers and authority
- Greater engagement, focus and attention during lessons
- A reduction in students being sent to the 'Remove Room' whilst the Creative Partnerships programme was operating
- An increase in school attendance among students who have not previously attended school on a regular basis.

## 2) Academic achievement:

*'Will it raise standards? Yes, of course, it will. Happy, creatively engaged students with a high degree of self-esteem, self-awareness, and self-worth will achieve more success whichever way you measure it.'*

*Tony Lyng, Headteacher, Brockhill Park School, Kent*

Teachers have noted that this improved motivation has led to benefits across the curriculum with almost 90% of those surveyed stating that Creative Partnerships has improved their ability to help young people reach their full potential.

The BMRB headteacher research also revealed a significant impact with 79% of those surveyed reporting improvements both in students' attainment and in general educational standards.

Important elements of academic achievement are:

- Students have the opportunity to learn by doing and this type of experiential learning has a stronger foundation than other more theoretical approaches.

- Channelling young people's energies into active learning improves discipline, concentration and listening skills – students develop experience of applying themselves through eg listening to instructions, which has an impact on the quality of learning. This has been observed to last beyond the duration of individual projects.

Research from Creative Partnerships Merseyside has recorded the GCSE pass rate in one partner school rising from a base of 29.6% in 2000 to 71% in 2005. A neighbouring non-Creative Partnerships school with a similar catchment of students had a 2005 5 pass A-C rate of 10%. The dramatic improvement is attributed, at least in part, to the work of Creative Partnerships.

Other Creative Partnerships Merseyside schools have directly attributed the following achievements to involvement in Creative Partnerships programmes:

- A marked improvement in reading levels at Key Stage 2 and a 20% rise in Key Stage 2 achievement to the Creative Partnerships programme. Operating in an area of multiple deprivation, this improvement is considered remarkable by the school.
- A 10% improvement at Key Stage 3 and a 19% improvement in the number of pupils gaining 5 GCSE A-C passes in 2005.

### **3) Skills development:**

The most frequent outcomes noted in case studies of Creative Partnerships projects relate to transferable skills. Teachers and researchers have consistently observed improvements in communication and expressive skills, such as

- Oral language skills
- Observation skills
- Questioning and negotiating
- Presentation skills

These observations were reinforced by research among headteachers, 91% of whom had seen an improvement in students' communication skills.

Relationships with peers and team working also frequently show notable improvement with the provocation a creative practitioner provides often allowing students to break down barriers, both between themselves and teachers, and among their own peer group.

At a more conceptual level, the willingness to try out new ideas, form different connections between them, take intellectual risks and transfer knowledge across different contexts are central features of the creative learning Creative Partnerships seeks to achieve, and feature strongly in analyses of entrepreneurial behaviours.

Creative Partnerships' achievements in this area are indicated by research from Creative Partnerships Kent which reveals:

- 50% of secondary school students in a study displaying radical change in their intellectual risktaking capacity and
- 36% displaying radical change around thinking differently

A further area of skill development frequently observed in Creative Partnerships schools lies in students' increased understanding of their own learning needs and their individual preferred learning styles. Developing an understanding of this empowers students and encourages them to increase their engagement in the learning process. As an indication of the scale of this change, 76% of the headteachers surveyed felt that their students had improved their ability to learn independently.

## **IMPACT ON TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS**

### **1) Teachers and teaching practice**

*'The curriculum is extensively enriched through the school's Creative Partnerships, which contribute positively to pupils' social development... There is evidence that more innovative learning strategies are developing as the project impacts positively on the effectiveness of teaching.'*

*Ofsted report for Islington Arts & Media School, March 2004*

The experience of planning and delivering projects in collaboration with creative practitioners, as well as extensive support from Creative Partnerships for Continuous Professional Development for teachers, has inspired many to make substantial innovations in their teaching practice.

Research among teachers across Creative Partnerships shows:

- Increased confidence and a willingness to take risks and innovate with curriculum delivery
- A wider range of cross curricular activity involving collaboration between teachers and team-teaching
- Less reliance on Qualifications and Curriculum Authority schemes of work and a greater facility in providing teaching tailored to pupil need
- Increased involvement in experiential learning
- More interactive teaching styles to accommodate the different learning styles that students display

This is borne out by research among headteachers in Creative Partnerships schools which indicated that 94% had seen an improvement in teaching skills.

## **2) Headteachers and whole school change**

Research indicates a number of policy changes being made by headteachers and their teams in schools following engagement with Creative Partnerships. Central among these is the decision to embed teaching and learning for creativity within the schools' delivery of the curriculum. This takes various forms, eg:

- The appointment of a Director of Culture and Creativity to embed and sustain a creative and cultural entitlement for all pupils
- Inclusion of creativity in schools' mission statements
- Formal commitments to creative approaches to teaching and learning in a variety of contexts.

There is also evidence from the headteacher research of young people's response to school changing, which has an impact on the overall learning experience for pupils, as well as the character and ambience of a school: 43% of headteachers reported improvement in attendance among students; while 14% had seen a reduction in exclusions and suspensions.

Other examples of whole school change resulting from Creative Partnerships work with schools to date are:

- A changed emphasis in Continuous Professional Development, embedding risk taking and innovation in teaching
- Changes in recruitment practice, with new appointees being interviewed on their ability to teach for creativity
- A greater emphasis on pupil voice, encouraging students to become a more significant force in decision making and policy setting within the school
- An enhanced sense of community and common purpose for schools
- An improved external image and profile for schools

## **Ongoing research and evaluation**

Creative Partnerships is committed to an ongoing programme of professional research and evaluation. This is determined by a national strategy which will continue to explore what is distinctive about Creative Partnerships and measure our impact both on schools and on young people's individual attainments.

We look forward to sharing this information with you.