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Word on The Street

An action research project based on

Mantle of the Expert

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“Creativity is not dreamy at all. To be creative you have to be anchored. It is domestic, mundane, earthy.”

Dorothy Heathcote

The Partners

Creative Partnerships, Derby
Red Earth Theatre
Reigate Primary School, Derby

Creative Team

Year 4 pupils at Reigate.
Angela Carey – CP Co-ordinator at Reigate.
Nick Cutts – CP Derby Creative Agent
Meg Harrison – Year 4 Teacher
Dr Dorothy Heathcote
Noel Holt – Year 4 Teacher
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Helen Betchley – Communication Support Worker
Stacey Rohomon – Communication Support Worker
Wendy Rouse – Red Earth Theatre
Amanda Wilde – Red Earth Theatre



**Old Alice in her Bacon Box:
The Little Eaton Hermit 1867 - 1927**

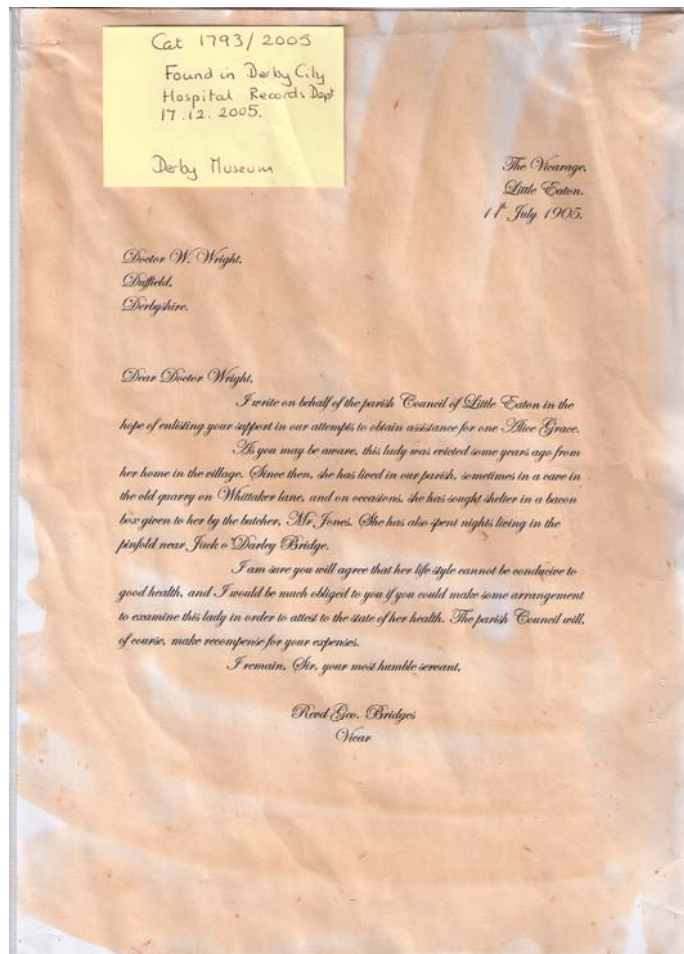
Creative Learning :

Context, Concept and Process

For one year we have been engaged in creative teaching and learning based on the concept of Mantle of the Expert developed by British drama educator Dorothy Heathcote. Our agreed purpose was to research the impact of social learning contexts on behaviours, attitudes to learning and academic achievement in the primary school classroom.

Reigate Primary School, where the project was based, is a large primary school on the outskirts of Derby. It has a high percentage of pupils with statements of special educational need. Most of these pupils are attached to the enhanced resource facility (ERF) which caters for hearing impaired and deaf children. These pupils use British Sign Language (BSL) as a means of communication. They learn for most of the time alongside pupils in the main classes and for some of the time in special sessions.

Two Year 4 classes – a total of 60 children aged 8 and 9 of whom 6 are deaf - were our collaborators on the project. Two of the deaf children have substantial special needs. From this group a cohort of 8 children (7 hearing and 1 deaf) were chosen as a key group to be studied in depth throughout the year. As the project developed, a further 4 children (3 hearing and 1 deaf) were added to the cohort, giving us a total of 12. Our tools for tracking the children were: group interviews with the cohort prior to the project's start, at its mid-term and at its conclusion; journals kept by all 4 members of the core team: Meg Harrison and Noel Holt (Year 4 teachers), Amanda Wilde and Wendy Rouse (Red Earth Theatre); and 20 minute observation diaries of sessions. Six mentoring sessions with Dorothy Heathcote and Marie Parker Jenkins scheduled at intervals across the year supported all aspects of the project's development.



**Artefact produced by teacher.
'Discovered' in researching the life of
Alice Grace.
Photo: Red Earth**

Initially Red Earth Theatre worked with each class for half a day on a fortnightly or weekly basis. Work was continued outside of these sessions for varying amounts of time by the teachers. As the project gathered pace, increasing amounts of time were given over to the project by the teachers outside of core sessions.

Mantle of the Expert is a drama-based mode of enquiry appropriate for all ages of children in the primary sector. Teachers and children work in role as colleagues employed in a fictional enterprise. These enterprises tend to operate as open, democratic and non-hierarchical (although highly structured) organizations in which team-work and collaboration, in order to get the job done, are prized. At Reigate we ran Word On the Street, a not for profit street magazine that benefited homeless children and young people.

In Mantle of the Expert all people (pupils and teachers) learn with others and from others, which is mostly what happens in everyday life, but not in most classrooms. Teachers and children imagine themselves in a different world where they share power as colleagues. The social imagination is what drives Mantle of the Expert and it is a powerful engine. The conferring of the title 'expert' does not give children any instant expert knowledge. Instead it activates the knowledge and skills children already have as they develop new facets of their expertise. Put most simply, Mantle of the Expert openly values and harnesses the cultural expertise children bring to school as key to their creativity and learning across the whole curriculum.

“It’s fun pretending to be people and do important jobs. Very different from other things in class.”

Year 4 Pupil

Project Headlines

Similar stimulus materials and drama strategies were used with both Year 4 classes to establish the enterprise: we run a street magazine – Word On The Street – that benefits children and young people. From this shared focus the work of each class diverged and developed differently. At key points, the classes were brought to a new shared focus by a teacher intervention.

- Mantle established: we run Word On The Street – a not for profit magazine.
- Alice Grace introduced through a fictitious news story: heavy rains in January cause rock fall in caves at Little Eaton in Derbyshire. Local school children unearth a metal Victorian hat box containing artefacts belonging to Alice Grace (a real person who lived in the caves in Victorian times. The hat box and its contents were fictitious.)
- Adult in role as curator from Derbyshire Museum approaches magazine for help in researching Alice Grace’s life. The magazine agrees to research for a “then and now” special edition comparing Alice Grace and her modern day equivalent.
- Adult in role as Grants Officer from a fictitious charity contacts the magazine with news of a bequest. Word On The Street Staff agree to commission an outdoor event raising the profile of homeless people.
- Word On The Street commissions an outdoor events organisation (two Year 5 classes) to produce a street opera celebrating Alice Grace’s life.



Year 4 pupils in role as journalists, sub-editors, photographers, marketers, administrators etc.

Photo © Maxine Hall

Pupil Voice/Pupil Perspective

The key characteristics of learning through Mantle of the Expert evidenced by this project are the development of the collective:

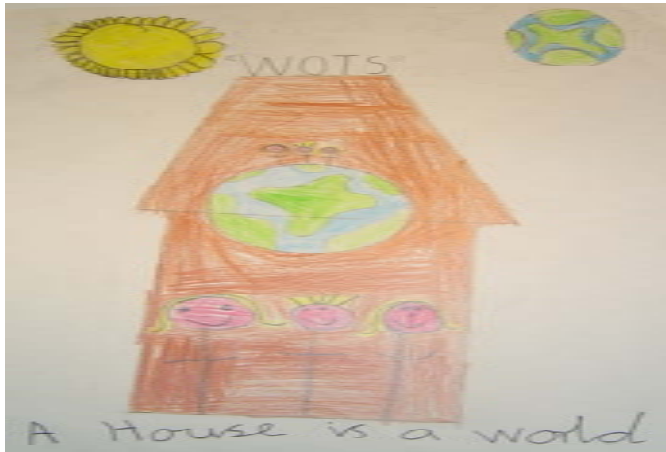
- imagination
- body of knowledge
- body of opinion
- problem solving powers
- social, political and moral viewpoints
- power

In Word On The Street participants were engaged in moment-by-moment planning of tasks related to the enterprise of running a magazine. In different groupings - whole class, teams, sub-groups, pairs - participants were continually involved in: collective discussions; research; collating materials; assessing options; decision-making and evaluation of the consequences of their actions for the future of the enterprise.

Both Year 4 classes began the project with the same stimulus – taking photographs (through the drama convention of depictions) of homeless people at night, for the next issue of Word On The Street. Within the first session each class had chosen a focus that took their work in different directions for several weeks.

Class 'NH', focusing on the prejudices shown towards homeless people in a rural context, struggled with questions like: What should we do when faced with a community that protects prejudice? What happens in a community where the perpetrators of crime are known but no-one dare speak out? What might be the consequences for you and your family if you do speak out? What does it cost to tell the truth?

Class 'MH' grappled with the moral responsibilities of photojournalists covering the plight of homeless people in the city. Questions that taxed the class



Design idea for a new logo for Word On the Street.

Photo: Red Earth

included: Is it intrusive to show pictures of vulnerable homeless people without their permission? Is it right to publish pictures of violence being done to homeless people? Do we intervene where people are potentially in danger? What are the responsibilities of the press and media?

Because the pupils became stakeholders in their own learning, engagement in the project was sustained. The research team were constantly amazed at the participants' ability to return quickly to the dramatic context and engage immediately with the task at hand.

In Class 'MH' the teacher obtained copies of the 1871 ordnance survey map of Little Eaton. Participants spent over two hours, without a break, studying the map to find out as much as they could about Alice Grace's world. A long list of questions was compiled arising from the map, leading to further research and clarification. The atmosphere of absorption in the shared task and the fun of discovery were powerfully felt by children and adults.

In Class 'NH' the participants received a letter from a (fictitious) Canadian Trust (the Andrea Riseborough Trust) offering to donate some money to WOTS. But there were strings attached. Vocabulary used in the letter did not appear in school dictionaries. Words had to be searched for in the Oxford English Dictionary. (This happened more often as the project went on.) Children were not put off by the complexity of language and 'officialese' in the letter. Rather, they believed that if they could 'get the sense' of the content, WOTS might benefit. They used words like pieces in a jig-saw puzzle to construct a picture that looked right. Collectively they speculated on the meanings in the letter and jointly came to an understanding of its content. At this point they could decide a course of action. Nonetheless they had to be careful to ensure they were entering into an ethical partnership with the Andrea Riseborough Trust. (This caveat operated as a productive drama tension for participants.)

As each class built belief in the enterprise and its importance, the participants became much more confident and bold in their decision making. They were willing to take on higher levels of responsibility, discussion and negotiation with people (teachers-in-role) who came to them with dilemmas.

“It almost nearly made you want to cry ‘cause they’re on the street and nowhere to live and they’re all cold.”

Pupil

Class ‘NH’: Participants questioned and re-negotiated terms and conditions for rent of a new office space with a City Council representative (teacher in role), much to their advantage.

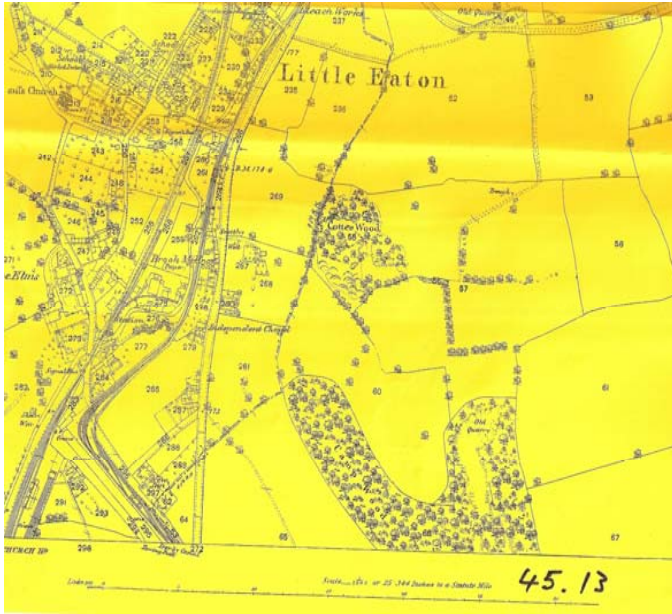
Class ‘MH’: Helped find Zoe (teacher role), the runaway daughter of a local Councillor and WOTS Board Member (teacher role), and restore family relations without the public getting hold of the story.

Once the power of the collective voice was established, it was understood that people would be listened to and ideas respected. Individuals, who otherwise tended not to take centre stage began to find their public voice.

Pupil ‘C’ was new to the school at the beginning of the project. She has a complex home background and is insecure as a result. She began to find her voice through the protection of the office telephone, often carrying out imaginary phone calls by herself. She then started to initiate phone calls, telling the Office Manager (teacher-in-role) that people were calling with problems that needed sorting out. The Office Manager (teacher role) used the telephone to give Pupil ‘C’ a public voice. Colleagues would have to listen to phone calls to find out important information, or help advise ‘C’ on responses. This became such a powerful source of invention and attention for Pupil ‘C’ that the Office Manager (teacher role) sometimes had to put restrictions on any use of the telephone because of the company phone bill.

Pupil ‘I’, an ethnic minority pupil whose home language is not English, remained silent in the early part of the project. Participants were talking to the ghost of Mrs Hammersley (teacher role). The first time Pupil ‘I’ spoke, several pupils laughed at her accent. By the middle of the second term she was addressing the whole team, in role, telling them about her life as a child living in the workhouse at Shardlow in the early 1900s.

Pupil ‘K’: WOTS received a letter from a fictitious character, Jo Martin, asking them to prepare dioramas about the life of Alice Grace for a Derbyshire Museum display. ‘K’ said, “Well, I’m not going to accept the project straight away. I know it’s good to be asked, but we don’t know enough about it just yet.



Map of Little Eaton - 1871

We need to find out more from J. Martin and we need to think about if it is something we really can do". In her project diary, Pupil 'K's teacher reflected that his measured approach was, "a real step forward for a pupil who normally does first and thinks after and loses his temper when things go wrong".

ERF Pupils: Initially worked as a separate group, struggling to engage in the dramatic world of the enterprise. Once activities became more concrete they engaged at a high level with the work, often more skilfully (within the drama) than their hearing colleagues. They gradually gained the respect of their colleagues, who began to communicate more freely with them. Many chose to work together in mixed groups. Because the Communication Support Workers could not cover all the groups, more hearing children communicated in British Sign Language.

Pupil 'L' first discovered her public BSL 'voice' through the telephone. We were not sure this dramatic device would work for the deaf pupils. This scene became the first time 'L' had her colleagues' total focus. They realised she had complete control of the situation and was able to carry out a conversation quite naturally with Zoe's Grandmother in Spain (teacher role) via the telephone. Something clicked for Pupil 'L' and her colleagues. At a certain point, there was collective recognition of similarities and respect for differences.

Pupil 'C': was receiving an abusive phone call from Zoe's dad. (This was 'C's own dramatic intervention.) Other pupils in her group became fully involved in her imagined drama and offered to take over the phone call in order to 'deal with him'.

The impact of the project went beyond the classroom. Pupils engaged with the subject matter throughout the year with friends and family.

Pupil 'L' persuaded his parents to take him to find the actual cave that Alice Grace lived in at Little Eaton. He described how they found it and what the cave looks like now.



Negotiating ideas
Photo © Maxine Hall

Pupil 'G' finds reading, writing and concentrated research very challenging. He went home and researched the story of Alice Grace on the internet with his brother and shared what he found with his colleagues. It became a regular feature of each session Red Earth attended, that 'G' would show and explain some information to us that he had researched about Victorian times. He showed us books, photographs, and his own writing.

Pupil 'A' told us that she goes home and plays at Alice Grace with her sister. She dresses as Alice and her sister plays the other people in her life. Sometimes her sister gets fed up and shuts her in her bedroom until teatime.

Embedded in this model of teaching and learning:

- Engagement
- Innovation
- Letting go of power
- Decision making
- Planning and evaluation
- Communication skills
- Speaking and listening
- Public voice

“I’ve got four brothers. I’ve been telling them about this and they’ve got really interested.”

Pupil

Impact on Wider Community

One of the measures of the success of the project is its impact on those not immediately involved. A wide variety of people came into contact with Word On The Street either directly or indirectly. This group included other teachers at Reigate, other schools in the city and beyond, parents, family members and friends, local councillors and politicians, arts professionals, delegates at national conferences. The project:

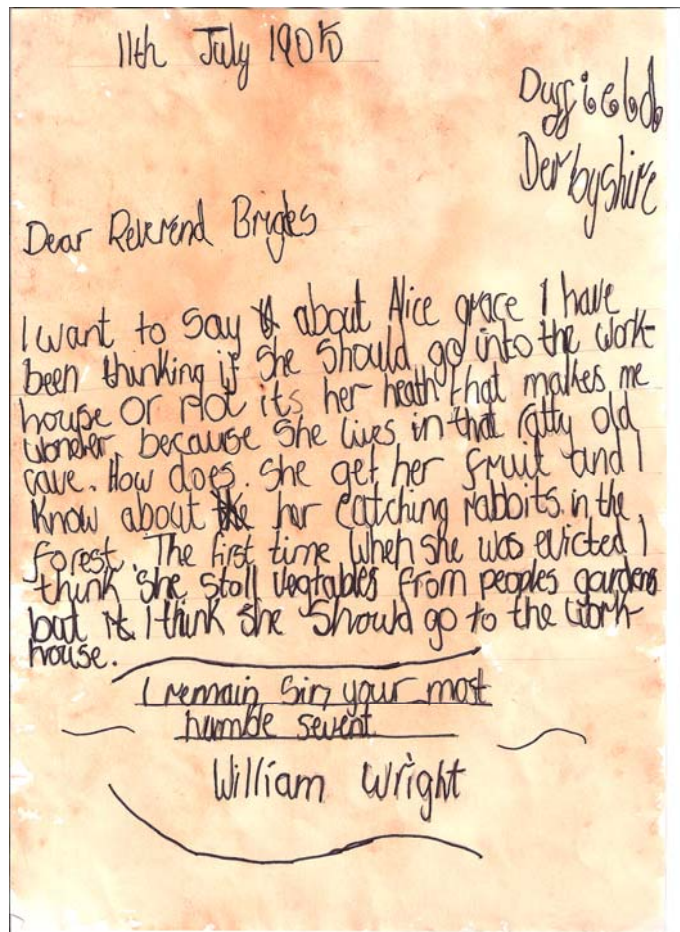
- Challenged expectations
- Excited questions and discussion
- Prompted interest in using Mantle by other educators and arts professionals

Grandmother – Volunteer: originally came as a volunteer to listen to pupils read. Participated in sessions and praised the work of WOTS during the year. Her expectations of how pupils would behave in a different learning context were positively challenged. She took on the role of a colleague alongside the pupils. She said how much she enjoyed the sessions she attended. She was able to explain the project to other parents visiting the school.

Parent: observed a WOTS session on open day. She was amazed at the amount of curriculum covered - geography, history, PSHE. She was also impressed by the participants’ level of social collaboration and the way Deaf pupils were included.

Parent: of a Deaf Pupil observed a WOTS session and was very positive about what her child had achieved.

Parent: on parents’ evening, seeing the 3D map made by one class, commented that their child had been telling them about the project at home; especially about making the map.



Artefact produced by Pupil in Role

Photo: Red Earth

The parent felt the project gave her more of a focus for discussion about her child with the teacher.

Parent: asked whether the work on WOTS and the research into Alice was real or not. This allowed the teacher a way into talking to the parent about the project and her son's positive contributions to the sessions. The parent took the child to Little Eaton to see Alice's Cave.

Year 6 Teachers: set up their own Mantle of the Expert project. They wanted to stage the Grand Opening of the maritime museum they had created. The CP co-ordinator offered to attend in role as The Mayor. She asked pupils questions they hadn't expected, or been primed for, about the origins of their artefacts and how they had obtained them. The Year 6 teachers were stunned by their pupils' ability to answer questions and maintain their roles as curators, archivists and museum workers.

Colleagues at the school: have commented on the quality of work produced by the project that has been put on display in classrooms and corridors.

Fifth Word: a young, emerging, Derby-based, theatre company have shared in some of the mentor sessions led by Dorothy Heathcote and have since worked with her in other Derby CP schools on different Mantle projects.

The Mayor of Derby: members of the School Council were offered the chance to talk to the Mayor on a pre-Christmas visit. Several questions were asked such as: "How long have you been Mayor?" and "Do you like being Mayor?" Pupil Reps from Year 4 asked, "What are you going to do about the homeless in Derby this Christmas?" Year 4 pupils explained their work for WOTS and the Mayor was impressed at pupils' grasp of the complex issues involved.

“I really enjoyed writing that letter. ‘Cause it was to a real person, you know, really real. It’ll be fun making those models. I like doing stuff like that. It’s well good.”

Pupil

Bob Laxton - MP: visited the school and took part, in role as a representative from Derbyshire Museum, in a session with each class. He was impressed with the idea that the work promoted collegiate working and how pupils were given status. He likened this to his own positive experiences of being provided with concrete learning contexts through work experience.

French Teacher from Corsica: spent a month in the school based with one of the Year 4 classes. She observed several sessions in this period and was amazed at the level of work sustained, the independent learning and thinking going on and the mature interaction promoted by the Mantle approach.

Other Schools in Derby: have made enquiries about the project and Mantle approach. The CP co-ordinator has been invited to speak about the work to staff in several Derbyshire primary schools.

Conference Delegates: in Norwich and Newcastle have participated in interactive workshops introducing WOTS and the Mantle approach. Feedback showed that participants recognised the potential of working in this way and were keen to know more.



Year 4 Pupil in role as sub-editor.
Photo © Maxine Hall

Academic Attainment

Using the results from annual tests for Writing and Literacy at Reigate as the baseline for quantitative data for the outcomes of the project, the table below illustrates the progress of the original cohort of 8 pupils, plus the additional 4 pupils. Placing their progress levels in Year 3 against those in Year 4 we are able to demonstrate the following:

- Each pupil attained an expected, or a higher grade than expected
- 4 pupils attained Grade 4 and could not be graded any higher for that year group; the test schedule and mark scheme does not go higher than the scores achieved.
- 1 pupil attained a 5 level rise in their grade over the year
- 2 pupils attained a 4 level rise in their grade over the year
- 3 of the 4 pupils who had shown no progress in their grades in Year 3, jumped 3 or more levels
- The Deaf (ERF) pupils attained level rises expected of hearing (non-ERF) pupils. They began to discuss what could happen next rather than give a reiteration of what had already been said.

These data demonstrates that the project contributed positively to pupils' attainment grades.



Year 4 pupils in role re-create an episode from Alice Grace's life.

Photo © Maxine Hall

Academic Data

| Cohort Baseline Data for Writing/Literacy Tests in Years 2, 3 and 4 | | | | | | | | |
|---|-------|------------------|--|---|----------------|-----------------|----------------|---|
| Pupil | Class | Deaf/ Hearing | Year 2 Grade | Year 3 Grade | Level Shift | Year 4 Grade | Level Shift | Teacher comments |
| Original Cohort | | | | | | | | |
| B | M | H | 2c | 2a | 2 levels | 2a | 0 levels | No change |
| C | M | H | New to school. Estimate of 2c at beginning of Yr 4 | | N/A | 2a | 2 levels | As expected |
| CS | N | H | 2b | 2b | 0 levels | 3a | 4 levels | Very good. Unexpected |
| H | N | H | 3c | 3a | 2 levels | 4 | 3 levels | Highest grade for this Key Stage |
| K1 | M | H | 2a | 3a | 3 levels | 4 | 1 level | Highest grade for this Key Stage |
| K2 | N | H | 2c | 2c | 0 levels | 3b | 4 levels | Very good. Unexpected |
| K3 | N | H | | Not scored. Teacher estimate Level P (below level 1) | | 1c | 1 level | Has made definite progress |
| L | M | D | 1c | 1a | 2 levels | 2b | 3 levels | Matches progress expected of a hearing child |
| Additions to Cohort During Year | | | | | | | | |
| G | M | H | 2c | 2c | 0 levels | 2b | 1 level | Reasonable progress |
| I | N | H | 2a | 3b | 2 levels | 4 | 3 levels | More than last year |
| J | M | D | 1c | 1a | 2 levels | 2b | 3 levels | Matches progress expected of a hearing child |
| L2 | M | H | 2a | 2a | 0 Levels | 4 | 5 levels | Outstanding |



Year 4 pupils in role as people living on the street.

Photo © Maxine Hall

Academic Achievement

Using data from the sessional Observation Records we were able to document the academic achievements of the cohort. These outcomes are qualitative in nature and look at broader, more culturally significant achievements. They are based on observations of the changes in pupil behaviour, levels of engagement in the work, social and emotional maturity and development of a sense of responsibility for learning on a personal and group level. In addition, notes from the teacher and practitioner logs gave us a whole class perspective on the same achievements.

Before the project began the teachers assessed their classes. The key factor that emerged was that both classes had a higher ratio of boys to girls. This social skew posed challenges to the progress of each class. Both classes had a large ability spread and a core group of pupils with significant learning difficulties.

In NH's class the ratio was 19 boys to 12 girls. There boys' behaviour was more boisterous and there were difficulties in motivating them. They needed to do things on the move and easily became fractious. As a result, the class moaned a lot. There were 6 pupils who struggled with writing, whereas there were others in the class who were extremely able, so motivation levels were split. Reading across the class was not as strong. There was no significant leadership and the whole class needed to gel.

In MH's class the ratio was 18 boys to 11 girls. If the boys couldn't do something the girls would take over. They became mothering. If there was clearing up to do the boys would want to go to the toilet. The brighter children needed stretching, whilst there were 6 Deaf children in the class, 2 of whom had substantial special needs. They were very noisy. The girls liked design and art, whilst the boys liked making things and technical activities. There was no significant leadership and the whole class needed to gel.

“I didn’t know what Mantle of the Expert was about. I felt nervous I suppose. I’m so glad I did it now and had a go. We’re going to be using Mantle next year.”

Year 4 Teacher

Running Word On The Street immediately threw participants into a situation where everyone had high but equal levels of responsibility. Each had a personal responsibility to ensure that the magazine was successful enough to support them as ‘workers’. The bigger, social purpose of supporting homeless children and young people could only happen when we were competent as an enterprise. Word on The Street provided a protected context in which pupils struggling with their own and their peers’ social, emotional and behavioural difficulties, could begin to engineer change, for the good of the enterprise.

Personal and collective shifts in behaviour and interaction began almost immediately. ‘K’, a pupil struggling with reading and writing, with a short attention span and craving physical action, initially was disruptive of the group’s work. He became the Health and Safety Officer for WOTS, noting down any incidents during working hours and reporting back to the staff at the end of the day. He worked closely with the teacher and other colleagues, who helped write his records. At one point he recorded his own unsafe behaviour in the book. From this point he became less and less disruptive of the enterprise.

The shift in the way pupils and teacher spoke to each other in these sessions began to have an impact on the quality of interaction between peers and adults. A change in language use and the content of discussions occurred. Participants were more willing to express personal feelings, beliefs and moral viewpoints, knowing they would not be laughed at but rather considered seriously and argued with sincerely. There was a palpable shift particularly in the boys, who showed greater emotional maturity.

The participants – in role as Victorian inhabitants of Little Eaton - were discussing whether Alice – Pupil ‘C’ in role –should go to the workhouse. The boys dominated the argument for and against freedom of choice in the way individuals live their lives. Some argued that Alice was a waste of space, others that her freedom was doing no one any harm. Would they like it if their children were sent to the workhouse? How would they feel then? This high level discussion was sustained by the group for a considerable time without intervention from the teacher. Pupil ‘C’ – in role as



Part of 3D map of Little Eaton – 1871.
Photo: Red Earth

Alice - eventually closed the argument with a very strong and powerfully delivered statement:

“You all want to take charge of me. I’m in charge of me.”

Facing new people (teachers-in-role) with new problems almost every session became part and parcel of what we did. Learning to deal with such a range of people, the emotional intelligence (self awareness, empathy and deftness with social interaction) of all participants grew significantly during the year.

Because the teacher worked as part of the same enterprise and adopted different roles, a respect for and understanding of the power of the creative process grew.

Tom Archer (teacher in role) was a farmer who let homeless people sleep in his barn. One day he found graffiti sprayed on his barn and came to WOTS for advice. The next night he was injured trying to stop people from the village damaging his property. WOTS representatives agreed to meet villagers to discuss the problem. The villagers (pupils in role) decided the identity of the people in their community who had hurt Tom Archer. The WOTS group decided separately that they had evidence of the crime and who was guilty. So, everyone at the meeting (children and adults in role) was reasonably sure of the identity of the perpetrators of the violence against Tom Archer. The meeting was electric. Also, the participants realised the responsibility they had for the quality of the dramatic event. After the meeting there was a general discussion about why the community protected people who had clearly committed a crime. H said:

*“Even if you want to tell the truth, you can’t
because of what would happen.”*



**Year 4 Pupils (from Word On the Street) commission Year 5 Pupils to stage a street opera as part of a Shadow Mantle.
Photo: Red Earth**

Reflective Practitioner / Teacher Perspective

Both teachers noted how shifts in their practice affected relationships with pupils and pupils' behaviours, attitudes to learning and achievements. They highlighted in particular an increased sense of responsibility demonstrated by children and the development of an attitude of professionalism, especially in relation to adults.

Whereas initially the teachers were nervous of the Teacher in Role convention (which is key to Mantle of the Expert), by the end of the project it had become almost second nature and it was breathtaking to observe the consummate ease with which teachers and children slipped into roles that offered opportunities for learning that previously had been untapped.

The teachers reflected that the development of their classroom language through the project offered opportunities for using more domestic, homely and affective language (ie: expressing and talking about feelings). This in turn encouraged children to raise and discuss a rich diversity of topics and to express and discuss feelings in a “no-penalty zone”, both in and out of role. They noticed how children appeared to feel protected into emotion (as opposed to being protected from it) even to the extent of raising personal experiences in a public forum. Pupil ‘G’ for example talked about his teenage brother who had become estranged from his family and become homeless.

“Mantle of the Expert has had a greater impact on a class of children than any other approach I have experienced in 20 years of teaching. ”

Year 4 Teacher

The strategy of withholding expertise also at first seemed challenging to the teachers but they came to recognize that it promoted creative learning. For example, researching the Victorian childhood of Alice Grace we were all struggling to get a sense of how a poor family like Alice’s might mark an occasion like her 8th birthday – or indeed whether they would mark it at all. In the course of the conversation, Pupil ‘D’ wondered whether Victorians had footballs. It was decided they probably did. Speculation turned to what footballs were made out of: wood or straw, bits of animals maybe, possibly pork chops, or animal skin. This particular whole class discussion thoroughly engaged everyone for several minutes during which the children raised and answered their own questions, speculated, and suggested and considered tangential ideas without the pressure of ‘right-answerism’. The teacher reflected that by withholding her knowledge at a certain point, the children were able to control, direct and sustain the dialogue and clearly enjoyed doing so.

With social support, pupils were able to grapple with complex moral and ethical questions and to make tough decisions that within the context of their fictional world had deeply felt and far reaching consequences. The teachers recognized that the roots of this empowerment of children were grown in their willingness to share power.

“He’s been talking about it all year. I thought he was telling me a fairy story.”

Parent

Conclusions

Outcomes show that the impact of the Mantle of the Expert approach on behaviours, attitudes to learning and academic achievement was positive. The project yielded evidence of substantial success.

Outcomes of the Project

➤ Academic:

- Pupils tackled written material in more complex ways
- Pupils successfully decoded complex and archaic documents and maps
- Higher writing and literacy test scores than expected

➤ Group Behaviour:

- Less fractiousness
- Less moaning
- Greater co-operation
- Improved social interaction
- More team working

➤ Individual Behaviour:

- More focused
- Sustained concentration
- Increased tolerance and acceptance of difference



Year 4 pupils in role

Photo © Maxine Hall

➤ **Improved Emotional intelligence:**

- Greater self awareness and discipline
- More ability to empathise
- Greater social awareness
- Improved social imagination
- More sophisticated social interaction

➤ **Communication Skills:**

- Giant leap forward in speaking and listening skills
- More effort on behalf of Deaf and hearing children to communicate with each other
- Increased level of signing (BSL) by hearing individuals

➤ **Cross Curricular Teaching and Learning:**

- Pupils were able to follow through particular ideas and passions to their conclusion
- Connections between subjects seen more clearly by the children
- Teachers were able to understand, in concrete ways, how the whole curriculum can be approached through Mantle of the Expert



Deaf performer David Ellington and hearing performer Beverley Denim. Actors working on a Shadow Mantle with Year 5
Photo © Red Earth

- **Sense of Cultural Heritage:**
 - A considerable respect built for Alice Grace, her world and time
 - Pupils felt they were commemorating a life and honouring it

- **Moral Development:**
 - Was demonstrated as the children questioned their own beliefs
 - Occurred as they grappled with questions about what was the good and right thing to do in situations that arose

- **Aesthetic Growth:**
 - Increased understanding and expertise in the art form of drama

- **Creative Learning:**
 - Pupils began to think more creatively
 - New ideas were generated
 - Pupils were more receptive to others' ideas.



Photo © Maxine Hall

In the context of Reigate, we tried to take note of what was happening during the academic year that could have impacted on the outcomes of the study. No other known variables that could have created these outcomes was identified. Similarly, we monitored any outside factors that could have had an impact on individuals in the cohort. Again, no other known variables were identified that could have affected the outcomes of their progress.

The project has considerable promise of replication and sharing. Both teachers involved plan to use Mantle of the Expert in their teaching next academic year. MH will be running a Publishing Company with Year 3 pupils and NH will be running an Eco Friendly Travel Company with Year 5. Reigate works on a system of Teaching Teams. Teams plan curriculum work together. MH and NH will be teaching in different year groups, paired with different colleagues next academic year. Their expertise will be shared with their new colleagues.

Inspired by the Mantle of the Expert buzz in the school, Year 6 colleagues have been running two Mantles this year: a Maritime Museum and a Forensic Science Laboratory. Their practice will continue next year, again with other colleagues in new year group teams.

In tandem with Word on the Street, Red Earth ran two Shadow Mantles that echoed themes developed in the Alice Grace material with Year 4. Year 1 ran an Animal Sanctuary (on the grounds of the old quarry in Little Eaton where Alice Grace lived). Dorothy Heathcote took the role of Alice Grace seeking sanctuary for herself. Year 5 ran an Outdoor Events Company commissioned by Word On the Street to put forward proposals for a large outdoor event celebrating the life of Alice Grace. Two actors worked with us on this project - a Deaf Actor and a hearing actor (who signs to BSL Level 3) - and we were joined by pupils from the Royal School for the Deaf in Derby.

**“It’s not just drama,
it’s history and
knowledge. It builds
up your knowledge
and in the future you
can tell people what
you learned. And
you’ve also got a skill
in drama.”**

Pupil

Reigate have forged a partnership link with the Royal School for the Deaf whose pupils visited to participate in Shadow Mantle sessions. This partnership is set to continue. Other schools in Derby have requested information about the project throughout the year.

