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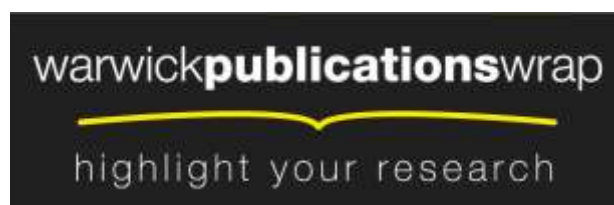
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SCHOOLS AS CREATIVE BEACONS II: Creative Partnerships, Coventry.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Creative Partnerships Coventry (CPC), October 2006-April 2007

From October 2006, CPC schools were engaged in developing creative learning and teaching, with the aim of building on their previously acquired Creative Partnerships (CP) experience. Two research mentors, Dr Stephen Cullen (CEDAR), and Dr Dimitra Hartas (WIE), from the University of Warwick, were assigned to CPC schools in an advisory and supporting role for the period from October 2006 until the end of April 2007. The CPC schools continued in Home Groups established for the first phase of Creative Partnerships Coventry (2005-2006), each of which shared a broad, but common, CP theme.

2. Headline Conclusions

- CP projects continued to be successful on an individual, school-by-school, basis.
- School CP co-ordinators continued to build expertise in the delivery of CP projects, and the evaluation of CP projects.
- Overall, little progress has been made in establishing permanent, formal, school research teams.
- In general, members of SMTs involved with CP projects are involved on an individual basis, not as part of a formal structure.
- Home Groups continued to develop, and are valued by school CP co-ordinators.
- Communication between Home Groups and CPC, and Home Groups and each other, could be usefully improved.

3. Main Findings

- Individual CP projects continued to be pursued with success in the majority of CPC schools working with the research mentors.
- The majority of schools have developed a reasonable level of creative teaching expertise, matched by a reasonable standard of action research.
- CP projects are still, typically, led, and evaluated, by one or two teachers in a school. There has been little progress in establishing permanent school research teams.

- Members of SMT in CPC schools tend to be involved on an individual basis in CP projects. There has been no universal move towards integrating SMT members into any form of permanent CP structure within schools.
- CPC projects largely happen as stand alone experiences. This is especially the case in secondary schools. However, some schools have made notable efforts to incorporate CP style teaching and learning into whole school planning and delivery.
- The Home Groups have continued to develop in a number of ways. They are a valued forum for discussion and sharing, and have shown that they can be used as effective CPD mechanisms for school CP co-ordinators.
- Home Groups have yet to find a single voice with which they can communicate directly with CPC. There is a feeling that concerns raised in Home Group meetings are not directly addressed by CPC.
- Home Groups could be further developed as more formal mechanisms for sharing CP knowledge.
- In general, CP projects are not perceived to have high priority in schools. CP work is also limited by the wide variety of demands, and time limitations, made on teaching staff.

1. Creative Partnerships Coventry

1.1 Background

Creative Partnerships Coventry (CPC) was part of the second wave of English schools Incorporated into the Creative Partnerships (CP) project. The stated aim of creative partnerships was to 'provide school children across England with the opportunity to develop creativity in learning and to take part in cultural activities of the highest quality' (www.creative-partnerships.com/aboutcp/). As an integral part of the CP scheme, participating schools were expected to evaluate their CP projects, and to ensure the dissemination of creative learning and teaching practices. To assist schools in their evaluation tasks, CPC assigned research mentors to all participating Coventry schools. The research mentors, drawn from the Centre for Educational Development, Appraisal and Research (CEDAR) and the Warwick Institute of Education (WIE), both in the University of Warwick, supported CPC schools in the Spring and Summer terms, 2006. The resulting report, *Schools as Creative Beacons; Creative Partnerships (CP), Coventry*¹ (September, 2006) evaluated the progress of CPC schools in terms of CP projects and the schools' development of their action research capacity vis a vis creative teaching and learning. Report recommendations² were incorporated by CPC into the next development stage of creative partnerships in Coventry schools.

1.2 CP Coventry, October 2006-April 2007

From October 2006, CPC schools were engaged in developing creative learning and teaching, with the aim of building on their previously acquired CP experience. Two research mentors, Dr Stephen Cullen (CEDAR), and Dr Dimitra Hartas (WIE), from the University of Warwick, were assigned to CPC schools in an advisory and supporting role for the period from October 2006 until the end of April 2007. The research mentors were in place to provide action research evaluation support, and were not themselves engaged in an evaluation of this phase of CPC. In the process of providing evaluation support (details of which are included in Appendices 1 and 2) aspects of the implementation of CP activity in CPC schools were observed, and form the basis of the observations in this report. In addition, there were a number of areas where school teaching staff expressed concern about CPC issues, and these reflections by school staff have also been included in this report, as opinions and observations made by those involved in the delivery of CPC projects in schools.

The CPC schools continued in their existing Home Groups, each of which shared a broad, but common, CP theme. The schools, themes, and mentors are identified in Table 1.1.

Table 1.1 CPC Home Groups, schools, and research mentors

Home Group (HG) & CP theme	School and mentor: (SC or DH)
HG 1: Transition/Learning Cultures	Courthouse Green Primary (SC)
	Finham Primary (DH)
	Finham Park Secondary (DH)
	Stivichall Primary (DH)
	Earlsdon Primary (SC)
	Southfields Primary (SC)
HG 2: Creative Curriculum	Blue Coat Secondary (SC)
	Ernesford Grange Secondary (SC)
	St Bart's Primary (SC)
	Pearl Hyde Primary (SC)
	Tile Hill Wood Secondary (SC)
HG 3: Inclusion	Centre 4 PRU (DH)
	Deedmore Primary Special School (DH)
	Edgewick Primary (DH)
	Foxford Secondary (DH)
	Hillfields EY Ex ctr (DH)
	Lyng Hall Secondary (DH)
	St Mary's & St Ben's Primary (DH)

N.B., SC: Dr Stephen Cullen; DH: Dr Dimitra Hartas.

The focus of the research mentor support was, at the outset, intended to be:

- To work with Home Groups to develop and extended the role of Home Groups as forums for sharing action research findings, developing CP projects, to increase the sense of participant ownership of Home Groups, and to initiate buddying between teachers within the Home Group and within CP schools.
- To assist SRTs in finding and utilising platforms for sharing CP learning with wider groups of school staff, both within and beyond the school.

- To support co-ordinators in seeking to engage SMTs in CP work, in order to enable the integration of CP projects with school improvement plans.
- To provide support, when required, for schools to establish School Research Teams (SRT) in each CPC school. The SRT was to consist of, at a minimum, the CP co-ordinator, a member of the school's senior management team (SMT), and at least one teacher engaged on a current action research project.

The outcomes of this phase of the CPC schools' work proved to be mixed. Overall, progress was made in terms of individual CP projects in particular schools, and there was some development of the role of Home Groups. However, in terms of the embedding of CPC teaching and learning in schools, and the involvement of SMT in that process, the outcomes were less positive.

2. CP projects and action research activity in CPC schools

All the CPC schools were made aware of the availability of support from the two research mentors. School co-ordinators were contacted on a personal basis, through Home Groups, and at larger CPC events, such as the CP Co-ordinators Research Day, held at Ryton Gardens on 1 December 2006. However, take up rates from CPC school co-ordinators were varied. Out of the 18 CPC schools involved, 13 requested, and received, research mentor support (11 schools had on site support, two had telephone and e-support), and five made no requests for support³.

2.1 Exemplar CPC schools - two examples

Levels of action research activity varied from school to school. Some schools exhibited effective CP project evaluations, and were active in developing their action research capacity. Two schools, in particular, could be regarded as having an exemplar status in this respect: School A, from Home Group 1, 'Transition/Learning Cultures', and school B, from Home Group 2, 'Creative Curriculum'. Both schools built upon their earlier CP experience to embed good practice, and develop action research expertise among their staff. In addition, both schools made a clear effort to share the CP learning experience among the teaching staff. In addition, project evaluation, and reflection on the part of participating staff, particularly in school B, had led to the identification of weaknesses as well as strengths in the delivery of CP projects.

2.1.1 School A

School A drew upon both research mentors to support their CP project, which involved pupils and teachers from Reception to Year 6. Research mentor support included a training session on 'Working with Children as Researchers', which was delivered to participating teachers, and focused on ways in which evaluation exercises could be incorporated into pupils' learning, while, at the same time, providing evaluation data for the CP project. In addition, a research mentor was closely engaged in providing evaluation support, and bringing together findings in a short evaluation report. Working with teaching staff, the research mentor reported that:

A key finding emerging from the discussions with teachers is that implementing creative practices has a cumulative effect, and although it is not easily quantifiable, it leaves a long-lasting impact on the wider culture of 'doing things' at school.

Overall conclusions from school A were both reflective and generally positive:

There is a consensus among staff that these creative sessions were valuable, in that they were not just another top-down, governmental initiative, but practices developed through the collaborative workings between teachers and artists, being embedded in the structure of the school as a whole. With regard to their long-term impact, a 'knowledge gap' was identified between reflection, learning and applying new ideas and practices. Staff explained this gap along the lines of qualified teachers being afraid of using their professionalism, and expanding creativity beyond the art-based subjects. They commented that creative sessions have the potential to bridge this gap in that staff are afforded opportunities for being part of a different, perhaps more creative way of teaching and learning.

It should be noted, however, that with such small scale studies it is not possible to demonstrate causal relationships; as the research mentor reported:

The view taken regarding this evaluation is that direct links between the creative sessions and children's academic and social functioning cannot be

drawn, given that the research design does not allow for causal links to be established.

This limitation is one that occurred with all the CP action research projects, but was not felt to undermine the value of either the projects. or the action research work undertaken by pupils and staff. In particular, with regard to building evaluation expertise among teachers, the recognition that small scale action research has limits was an important learning experience. Further, teachers involved in exemplar practice gathered data in a variety of ways, including baseline data collection, the generation of pupil, teaching staff, and parental evidence, and practitioner observations.

2.1.2 School B

The second exemplar CP project and evaluation, at school B, built upon an earlier, successful CP project, that had raised enthusiasm for creative teaching and learning throughout the school. Although plans to create a CP school research team and a creativity funding group had not been carried through, a school wide CP project was developed, involving mixed year group teaching, cross-curricular teaching and learning, and creative approaches to the subjects involving a range of teaching staff. Overall, it was felt by school staff that the CP project had been a success. It was greatly enjoyed by the pupils, especially the cross year group events, when children were combined into themed, mixed year groups. In addition, the project was valued by teaching staff who felt that it had helped to bring together the staff around a common teaching task. This was in the context of a school reorganisation in the previous year that had seen combined year group teaching teams being disbanded, resulting in a feeling of isolation among individual teachers.

The evaluation of the project by the teaching staff was a little fragmented, and illustrated that, even in an effective CP school, action research knowledge and practice is partial among the teaching body. Baseline data collection was incomplete, although sufficient data were collected for some results to be drawn at the end of the project. Teachers, pupils, and parents were involved in the evaluation process, and the school benefited from using pupils as primary researchers, with the oldest year group acting as research workers, utilising semi-structured interview schedules to record the reflections and impressions of younger pupils.

Much of the impetus behind the successful implementation of both the CP project and its evaluation at school B lay with the responsible teacher. This teacher had drawn in other members of the teaching staff, and had provided the main motor for the project. However, it was felt that there were a number of difficulties faced by the school in relation to both CPC and creative projects. School B had experienced difficulties with one of the CPC 'creatives' (a contracted artistic support worker), who was reported to have been unwilling to fit into the project as envisaged by the school. The creative's proposals for the CP project had, in fact, been rejected by a whole school staff meeting, and the contract was ended. There was also a feeling on the part of the school that CPC was too 'Napoleonic', too directional, in its desire to manage projects in schools. The school's view was that it should have greater autonomy, and that a more effective use of outside 'creatives' would be to help the skills of school staff, rather than providing direct input into projects. However, it was acknowledged that this would mean INSETs for teachers, and time was a barrier in that respect. Finally, it was felt that in school B the future success of CP style teaching and learning would depend on a much greater degree of involvement on the part of the school leadership team, something that had not occurred thus far.

3. Home Groups

'To work with Home Groups to develop and extend the role of Home Groups as forums for sharing action research findings, developing CP projects, to increase the sense of participant ownership of Home Groups, and to initiate buddying between teachers within the Home Group and within CP schools'.

3.1 Developments in CPC Home Groups

Typically, school CP co-ordinators were keen to expand the role and significance of the Home Groups. There was an acceptance that Home Groups had a great deal of potential in a number of areas:

- As a mechanism for facilitating creative learning opportunities for CP co-ordinators.
- As a forum for sharing good practice and knowledge gained in individual schools within each Home Group.
- As a structure that could enable 'buddying' between teachers and schools.

- As a collective voice for CP teachers, vis a vis CPC, and school management teams.
- As a launch platform for further dissemination of CP projects in individual schools and Home Groups.

3.1.1 Home Groups and learning opportunities for co-ordinators

Home Groups have a potential to act as a mechanism for continuing professional development for school CP co-ordinators in the area of creative teaching and learning. This was illustrated by the successful Creating Learning Cultures Home Group day-long event held at Compton Verney in October, 2006. This event was organised and facilitated by the Home Group's creative advisor. The day combined creative methods of sharing among the CP co-ordinators, along with formal and informal discussion, and networking between them. In addition, the co-ordinators were introduced to the resources available to schools in the Compton Verney art collection. It was a successful event that extended the knowledge and skills of those in attendance, and created stronger links between schools and their CP co-ordinators.

3.1.2 Home Groups as a sharing and 'buddying' forum

The common experience across all three Home Groups is that their meetings play a primary role in enabling co-ordinators to share CP experiences, action research findings, and enable personal links to be made between different schools' co-ordinators. Without the Home Group meetings, these activities would be difficult to facilitate.

Although Home Group meetings are the main sharing forum, it can be argued that this mechanism is still very informal. The Home Group as a vehicle for sharing research and raising awareness of each others' practice has been useful, as it offers the opportunity for teachers to come together and, informally, discuss their research. However, its remit with regard to sharing research-informed practice seems to be limited. Perhaps the use of structured tasks may facilitate this process. In some Home Group meetings, the discussion became more substantial when a structured task was set, e.g., bring a canvass to tell a story of what creativity means in your school and the ways of expressing it. Moreover, the introduction of structured tasks such as presentations of research data and results; bringing tangible evidence / artefacts constructed from the research findings / work that are used in classroom / playground; discussions on the impact of creative sessions on children's learning and

school ethos and future research directions may facilitate Home Group meetings. These activities can be delivered individually or collectively, especially for schools that explore similar issues. Moreover, the development of a newsletter or any other publication to create a public space where discussions, views and research activities and classroom practice are distilled and shared, may form a platform for cross fertilization and debate.

3.1.3 Home Groups as a collective voice

School CP co-ordinators have expressed strong opinions about their experiences within CPC, within the context of a variety of pressing priorities in their day to day school experience. For example, at one Home Group meeting, a variety of issues were raised by co-ordinators with regard to the relationship between CPC and individual schools and their projects. There was a general feeling that, from the co-ordinators' viewpoint, there was a 'lack of clarity, a lack of precision' on the part of CP Coventry . One speaker explained that it had been expected by the school that once the initial phase of CP work had been undertaken, schools would be left to develop by themselves: 'all along I thought that they [CP] were going to get us going, after that the **schools** would get it going'. This view was supported by other speakers, one of whom commented that : 'things [are] done to schools, or given to schools' rather than letting schools run with things. There was a feeling that CP Coventry produced too many projects (about which, it was said, there was a 'lack of clarity about what the projects are'), and made too many demands on co-ordinators and school staff. In addition, there was some concern that some 'creatives' were not effective enough, that they either did not have the artistic skills, or the teaching skills that were necessary. This point was made strongly by one co-ordinator, who noted that some of the 'creatives' are 'people who are just not up to the job'. The Ricoh project was seen to be an example of this – 'I do question some of the "experts" visited upon us, people visited upon us, who, for some reason, might not be suitable'. Although a representative of CPC was in attendance at that Home Group meeting, as at most Home Group meetings, there was no subsequent sense among the co-ordinators that the issues they had raised together had been addressed by CPC.

The issues raised by co-ordinators at Home Group meetings illustrated the importance of the meetings as a forum for discussion. There was a sense at Home Group meetings that co-ordinators were able to utilise the meetings as a space where they could air issues and problems. Nonetheless there was also a feeling among co-ordinators that although Home Group meetings provided a space where

they could voice concerns, there was no evidence that common Home Group positions were being acted upon, or, indeed, transmitted to CPC.

3.1.4 Home Groups as launch platforms

CP co-ordinators believe that Home Groups have the potential to act as mechanisms to enable wider dissemination of CP work. However, there has been limited success in developing Home Groups as dissemination launch platforms, and more work is required in this area. Linking projects together and offering opportunities to teachers to visit and observe each others' settings and work patterns are essential elements in ensuring the long-term impact of CP. Results from school action research should be shared and cross-examined in order to become internalized by the schools to make a real difference in classroom practice. Also, common themes and issues emerged across schools, and insights gained in one school may be useful in other schools as well, avoiding duplication of practice. The reality in schools is that teachers have a very limited time to go beyond the process of collecting / organising data and start drawing the important issues for their own teaching, as well as share them.

3.2 Issues in relation to further CPC Home Group development

Home Groups play a useful role in providing a forum for individual school CP co-ordinators to exchange experiences, ideas, and action research findings. In addition, they have also proved to be a useful mechanism for extending the creative skills base and knowledge of CP co-ordinators. Nonetheless, there are currently barriers to the extension of the Home Group function. Although Home Group meetings act as forums for the expression of problems relating to the relationship between co-ordinators and CPC, as well as between co-ordinators and their schools, as yet, the Home Groups have not developed a distinctive, group voice in these areas. There is no clear mechanism that links Home Groups to decision-making in CPC.

Further, with Home Groups meeting once a term, there is limited time available for the variety of functions that Home Groups seek to carry out. The lack of time available to school CP co-ordinators, along with other, often conflicting, school priorities, limits the scope for a further extension of both the individual co-ordinators' roles, and that of the Home Groups.

4. Platforms for CP dissemination

'To assist SRTs in finding and utilising platforms for sharing CP learning with wider groups of school staff, both within and beyond the school'.

Within schools, there are two main platforms for the dissemination of CP action research findings. The first takes the form of informal conversations between teaching staff. The second involves more formal methods of sharing – be it a staff meeting, or an end of CP project event, to which, typically, all the school community, including parents and carers, are invited. Both these methods can be effective ways of sharing CP learning between teachers. Nonetheless, the degree to which that sharing impacts upon teaching practice in schools will be determined by the priority that CP style teaching and learning is given within a school – something that is related to school leadership.

Beyond the CPC schools, events like the 'Talking Creative Lessons' days, which have showcased CPC work, have enabled CP and non-CP schools to benefit from the sharing of experiences and knowledge gained by CP schools. These high-profile events need, perhaps, to be underpinned by smaller sharing events, perhaps focused on bringing the three Home Groups together as a unit.

5. School SMTs, school research teams, and research mentoring

'To support co-ordinators in seeking to engage SMTs in CP work, in order to enable the integration of CP projects with school improvement plans'.

'To provide support, when required, for schools to establish School Research Teams (SRT) in each CPC school. The SRT was to consist of, at a minimum, the CP co-ordinator, a member of the school's senior management team (SMT), and at least one teacher engaged on a current action research project'.

In their meetings with schools, the research mentors worked with individual teachers, rather than establishing a partnership with a school research team, including a SMT member. Typically, schools seemed to be content to allow one or two individual teachers to take responsibility for developing and delivering CP projects.

Wider school priorities, primarily associated with curriculum demands and, for secondary schools GCSE targets, overshadow, often to a great extent, the place of

CP projects in schools. There is evidence that, in some secondary schools, in particular, the result is that CP projects have a limited effect in terms of the reach of the projects, or the future of projects in those schools. Where members of the SMT were already involved in CP projects in schools, this involvement continued. However, there is little evidence that schools have the capacity to develop standing CP teams which are fully integrated with the SMT structure.

With regard to establishing a team of staff keen to understand more about how to research and evaluate creative learning, limited progress has been made. In the majority of the schools, typically, an individual teacher undertakes the research. Although there is a consensus that CP projects are part of the developmental plan of the school, in practice this is not always the case. Nonetheless, the nature of the research questions, and most importantly, the creative sessions with artists do often operate at a whole school level.

For the schools that are involved in action research, mentoring has been useful, especially in assisting them making sense of their data, reflecting on the implications of the research result for their own practice, and having the opportunity to discuss ideas for further research. For schools that are still apprehensive of research and have less of a capacity to engage with it, the research mentor role has not been effective. However, having said this, we believe that, in these schools, there are systemic issues that need to be addressed in order to optimise research mentoring. In this case, systemic issues refer to the priorities of the school and the SMT views on building research capacity, and most crucially the status that is given to research in these schools.

Discussions with the creative advisers have been fruitful in terms of bringing together CP and research mentors' views. Liaison between creative advisers and research mentors should become an important part of the research mentor role, and perhaps the platform for supporting research sharing and dissemination.

6. Concluding remarks

CP schools in Coventry continued to make progress in designing, implementing, and evaluating CP projects. Overall, creative teaching and learning continued to be the focus of some attention in many of the schools involved. However, progress in

specific areas targeted for development was mixed. A summary of the many points is given below:

- Individual CP projects continued to be pursued with success in the majority of CPC schools.
- The majority of schools have developed a reasonable level of creative teaching expertise, matched by a reasonable standard of action research.
- CP projects are still, typically, led, and evaluated, by one or two teachers in a school. There has been little progress in establishing permanent school research teams.
- Members of SMT in CPC schools tend to be involved on an individual basis in CP projects. There has been no universal move towards integrating SMT members into any form of permanent CP structure within schools.
- CPC projects largely happen as stand alone experiences. This is especially the case in secondary schools. However, some schools have made notable efforts to incorporate CP style teaching and learning into whole school planning, and delivery.
- The Home Groups have continued to develop in a number of ways. They are a valued forum for discussion and sharing, and have shown that they can be used as effective CPD mechanisms for school CP co-ordinators.
- Home Groups have yet to find a single voice with which they can communicate directly with CPC. There is a feeling that concerns raised in Home Group meetings are not directly addressed by CPC.
- Home Groups could be further developed as more formal mechanisms for sharing CP knowledge.
- In general, CP projects are not perceived to have high priority in schools. CP work is also limited by the wide variety of demands, and time limitations, made on teaching staff.

¹ Cullen, S; Hartas, D; Medwell, J; Lindsay, G; *Schools as Creative Beacons; Creative Partnerships (CP)*, Coventry, CEDAR, WIE, University of Warwick, September 2006.

² Ibid., pp.14-5.

³ DH gave on site support to six of her 10 CPC schools, and SC gave on site support to 5 of his 8 CPC schools.

Appendix 1: Summary of school and Home Group contact for Dr S.M. Cullen.

Introduction:

Following the 'Schools as Creative Beacons; Creative Partnerships (CP), Coventry' project (2005-2006), involving three research mentors from CEDAR, University of Warwick, and the Warwick Institute of Education, University of Warwick, two research mentors (Dr Stephen Cullen and Dr Dimitra Hartas) from the initial group continued to act as mentors to Coventry CP schools, from October 2006 – May 2007.

I acted as research mentor to the following CP schools:

Home Group 1: Transition/Creating Learning Cultures.:

Courthouse Green Primary School
Earlsdon Primary School
Southfields Primary School

Home Group 2: Creative Curriculum:

Blue Coat C of E Secondary School
Ernesford Grange Secondary School
St Bartholomew's C of E Primary School
Pearl Hyde Primary School
Tile Hill Wood Secondary School
(Mount Nod Primary School was initially part of CP Coventry, but dropped out by the beginning of November 2006)

All schools were contacted on 31 October 2006, at the outset of the project , with details of the scope of the second phase of the project, and the role of the research mentor. It was stressed that the research mentors were a resource that could be called upon by schools as they saw fit. The purposes of the second phase of CP involvement, and the role of research mentors, was repeated at Home Group meetings, and at the Creative Partnerships Co-ordinators research day held at Ryton Gardens on 1 December 2006.

1. Research Mentor contacts and input – Home Groups.

1.1. CP Co-ordinators research day, Ryton Gardens, 1/12/06.

As part of the research mentors' input to the CP school co-ordinators' research day, I gave a presentation on 'CP, the Big Picture – from the Creative Economy Programme to Nurturing Creativity'. This presentation aimed to give school co-ordinators information on five key areas of CP :

1. To put the Coventry experiences of CP at school level into a national (English) context.
2. To outline the DfES's vision of creativity in schools.
3. To outline the future of creative teaching and learning.
4. To utilise recent research findings on the impact of CP.
5. To provide co-ordinators with material to support their case in their schools.

The presentation outlined the findings and implications of: the Roberts Report - *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* (July, 2006), the government's response to the Robert's Report (November, 2006); the OfSTED report, *Creative Partnerships: initiative and impact* (2006); and related the *Every Child Matters Framework*, the *Creative Economy Programme* and the establishment of the Creative and Cultural Advisory Board (CCAB), to CP in Coventry schools.

Following the research mentor inputs, I summarised the focus of the current phase of CP Coventry, and reiterated that the research mentors were 'on call' for the schools, which should approach them for research support.

1.2. Home Group meetings – Creative Curriculum.

1.2.1. Creative Curriculum HG meeting 1 -, 9 November 2006.

Present:

CAs: George Egan, Sally Harper, Claudette Bryanston.

School co-ordinators: Judith Woodfield (Tile Hill Wood Secondary); Denise Brown (Pearl Hyde Primary); Russell Hogben (St. Bart's Primary); Deborah Collum (Blue Coat Secondary).

The Home Group meeting reviewed and discussed key CP areas, and a number of issues arose.

-
- A review of recent CP projects developed into a discussion about the nature of CP, and a number of problems were identified. There was a general feeling that, from the co-ordinators' viewpoint, there was a 'lack of clarity, a lack of precision' on the part of CP Coventry . One speaker explained that it had been expected by the school that once the initial phase of CP work had been undertaken, schools would be left to develop by themselves: 'all along I thought that they [CP] were going to get us going, after that the **schools** would get it going'. This view was supported by other speakers, one of whom commented that : 'things [are] done to schools, or given to schools' rather than letting schools run with things. There was a feeling that CP Coventry produced too many projects (about which, it was said, there was a 'lack of clarity about what the projects are'), and made too many demands on co-ordinators and school staff. In addition, there was some concern that some creatives were not effective enough, that they either did not have the artistic skills, or the teaching skills that were necessary. This point was made strongly by one co-ordinator, who noted that some of the creatives are 'people who are just not up to the job'. The Ricoh project was seen to be an example of this – 'I do question some of the "experts" visited upon us, people visited upon us, who, for some reason, might not be suitable'.
 - Purpose of the Home Groups. The group agreed that a central purpose of the Home Group was for co-ordinators to use it to support each other and develop cross-school linkages. After agreeing this, each co-ordinator went on to outline developments in their school:

St Bart's: Although plans to develop a CP steering group, and a CP funding group, had not worked, a decision had been made to spread CP style practice throughout the school, and to involve all teaching staff in this. The school's aim was to try and work towards a more creative curriculum, based on whole school creative foci, e.g. a history-based whole school focus in the autumn 2006 term, and a geography-based focus ('Global Imaging') in spring 2007 [see report below].

Pearl Hyde: The school is currently involved in a long-term project to buy in the International Primary Curriculum (IPC). This had been resisted by the teaching staff, but was going ahead. The IPC provides outline teaching

schemes, but much work has to be done to give these substance. As a result, teaching staff time will be taken up by this large-scale process.

Blue Coat School: It was reported that Blue Coat 'had had difficulties' as far as CP was concerned. The conclusion was that CP 'hasn't taken off as a whole school initiative'. It was felt that 'the culture is, "the school is doing very nicely, thank you"', and that this was not conducive to the spread of CP creativity in Blue Coat. Further, 'Blue Coats, as a school, is **not** keen in upending the timetable' for CP projects.

Tile Hill Wood: Cross-curricular groups had been established among the teaching staff, and the intention was that these groups would inform and facilitate creative teaching and learning. Five projects were underway , including one involving Motorola and one which involved St Bart's. This link between these two Home Group schools, a primary and a secondary, was described as being 'absolutely fantastic'. Tile Hill Wood was also planning to make more links with primary schools along similar lines as that with St Bart's.

- There was no steering group update, as the group had yet to meet.
- An update on PAF issues included the reminder that the PAFs had to be completed, and signed, by July.
- I spoke on the current phase of CP in schools, and stressed both the need to include SMT where they were not already, as at Tile Hill Wood and Ernesford Grange, closely involved with CP projects. It was stressed that schools had to be pro-active in asking for research mentor support.
- A discussion on the development of the Home Group, and sharing mechanisms and structures reaffirmed the understanding that the Home Group should act as a forum for the co-ordinators themselves, and that they should control the agenda and discussion. No agreement was made on formal sharing arrangements, but all present agreed to ensure that they had each other's contact details. Difficulties surrounding arranging cover for visits to each other's schools were discussed, but the idea was seen to be a good one.

1.2.2. Creative Curriculum HG meeting 2 -, 22 March 2007.

Present:

School co-ordinators: Mike Garlick (Ernesford Grange); Denise Brown (Pearl Hyde Primary); Russell Hogben (St. Bart's Primary); Deborah Collum (Blue Coat Secondary).

CAs: Sally Harper, Claudette Bryanston.

Coventry LA: representative.

CP Coventry: Fiona Clayton.

- The HG meeting opened with Denise Brown and Sally Harper giving an account of the CP project, 'Animal Tales' that was running at Pearl Hyde School [see report below].
- The other three schools represented gave brief accounts of projects running in their schools.

Ernesford Grange had four projects running. However, of those four only one was seen to be satisfactory – the school newsletter. This was being produced by pupils, and was to be a replacement for the head teacher's newsletter. Matters had not progressed as far as hoped, as 'this term has been difficult for staff' for a variety of reasons. The three other projects – 'Invited Disturbances', 'Learning Moves', and 'Space of Possibilities', had not been viewed favourably. The feeling was that these three projects were projects that 'CP did to us, effectively'.

Blue Coat: The feedback from Blue Coat School was, overall, negative. There was agreement that the school's experience had been similar to Ernesford Grange's latter three projects. It was felt, in particular, that the Ricoh Project 'was flawed'. It was also announced that a new co-ordinator would be taking over at Blue Coat.

St Bart's: The point was made that 'off the peg projects don't work well' in schools, and that home-grown projects were more likely to be successful. It was argued that once schools had experience of delivering a CP project, then schools should be free thereafter to develop their own, home grown, schemes. A report on the development of the 'Global Imagining' project at St. Bart's followed [see report below].

- A general discussion followed, in which a number of issues were raised. Mick Garlick noted that Ernesford Grange had under 30% A-C passes at GCSE, and that the core school effort was focused on improving this figure. Teaching

staff were, as a result, resistant to initiatives that deflected them from what they saw as their main target – GCSE results. Deborah Collum noted that Blue Coat suffered from a different problem, in that the school's results were very good, and staff saw no need to innovate and thereby, as they saw it, threaten the results. Denise Brown agreed that it was difficult, in the climate that prevailed, to encourage staff to focus on the process, rather than the output.

- Fiona Clayton opened a discussion about the nature and purpose of Home Groups. It was argued that it would be good for the co-ordinators to have a whole morning or afternoon to debate and share knowledge from their experiences with CP. The idea of sharing PAFs with each other was raised, as a way of keeping all the Home Group schools informed about developments in other schools. It was agreed that 'the most creative things arise out of conversation [between teachers]', and that more time was needed for that.
- Fiona Clayton gave an initial brief on the second Talking Creative Lessons Day (29 June 2007).
- I talked about the role of the learning mentors, reinforcing previous messages about availability and willingness, on the part of the mentors, to respond to the needs of the co-ordinators.

1.2.3. Creative Curriculum HG meeting 3 -, 26 April 2007

- This Creative Curriculum HG meeting focused on my presentation, 'Working with Children as Researchers'. Everyone received a pack with material covering:
 - i. Creative Partnerships – research and evaluation: working with children as researchers.
 - ii. An outline evaluation framework for CP projects.
 - iii. Gathering evidence from children – listening to children.
 - iv. Primary school children as researchers – the mosaic approach.In addition, each pack contained a copy of *The Evaluator's Cookbook* (NECF).

This material formed the basis of the presentation, the aim of which was to provide the co-ordinators with a complete package that would enable teachers to utilise children as researchers and evaluators.

1.3. Home Group meetings – Transition/Creating Learning Cultures.

1.3.1. Transition HG day meeting 1 -, 20 October 2006.

- The Transition/Creating Learning Cultures Home Group attended a day long meeting and workshop, facilitated by Lesley Whelan, at Compton Verney on Friday, 20 October. The day enabled school CP co-ordinators to share knowledge and ideas, and build links between schools. In addition, I was able to reiterate the role of the research mentor, and explain the support that was available for schools undertaking evaluation and developing their CP work.

1.3.1. Transition HG day meeting 2 -, 21 March 2007.

Present:

School co-ordinators: Gill Naylor (Earlsdon Primary School); Sarah (Finham Park), Daphne (Stivichall Primary).

CP Coventry: Fiona Clayton.

(Both research mentors were in attendance, as this HG was a shared responsibility).

- The three co-ordinators gave resumes of their projects. For Earlsdon Primary, Gill Naylor outlined the progress of the SPARK mathematics project [see report below].
- Fiona Clayton briefed those present on paperwork completion, and explained that she had developed a single flow diagram which identified each stage of a project and the corresponding actions required by CP Coventry. Unfortunately, she was unable to distribute this at the time, but it was warmly welcomed.

2. Research Mentor contacts and input – Schools.

2.1. Visit to Earlsdon Primary School, 13 December, 2006.

- This visit was to work with Gill Naylor, the school CP co-ordinator, to review the progress of the SPARK! mathematics project. Earlsdon. This project was being run over the three terms of the 2006-2007 school year, and was focused on Year 3 pupils, addressing areas of the numeracy curriculum. A visiting maths expert, Adam Boddison, was to work over the entire length of the project with three different artists.
- I provided research evaluation support, with ideas about using pupil interviews, pupil journals, DVD evidence, and teacher and CP co-ordinator

observations and journals. In addition, the Year 3 teacher was briefed about the nature and purpose of the evaluation.

- Gill Naylor, and Earlsdon Primary, had structured the SPARK project well, and the project, and its evaluation, was on course.

2.2. Visit to Courthouse Green Primary School, 11 January, 2007.

- This visit was to review the PAF for the 'Talking Spaces' CP project at Courthouse Green. The focus of this project was to continue the Early Years 'Talking Spaces', which involved a storyteller working with school staff to encourage the acquisition, development and use of language among pupils.
- I worked with Ann Hammersley (the school's CP co-ordinator) and the Reception class teacher on their project, focusing on ways of collecting children's and teachers' evidence, and the collection, analysis, and archiving of all evaluation evidence. In addition, the need for a CP team meeting in the school, involving all teaching staff, was discussed, as was the need for developing a permanent sharing mechanism in the school.

2.3. Visit to Pearl Hyde Primary, 30 January, 2007.

- The aim of this visit was to speak to all teaching staff with an interest in taking part in the proposed 'Animal Stories' CP project (involving Sally Harper working with Foundation and KS1 pupils, from 2 February). The meeting took the form of a training session about running an action research project, evidence gathering, data collection, analysis, and, using children as researchers.
- The training session was built around my 'Working with Children as Researchers' pack. Everyone received a pack with material covering:
 - i. Creative Partnerships – research and evaluation: working with children as researchers.
 - ii. An outline evaluation framework for CP projects.
 - iii. Gathering evidence from children – listening to children.
 - iv. Primary school children as researchers – the mosaic approach.In addition, each pack contained a copy of *The Evaluator's Cookbook* (NECF).

The essential elements of evaluating a primary school project, particularly working with younger children, were covered. Eight members of the teaching staff were in attendance.

2.4. Visit to Courthouse Green Primary School, 27 February 2007.

- As requested by Ann Hammersley, I attended a story telling session, run by Danya Williams, at Courthouse Green's nursery. The purpose of the observation was to familiarise myself with the story telling sessions in order to assist Courthouse Green in its evaluation of this CP project.
- Prior to the beginning of the session, Danya had a meeting with parents to explain the work that she was doing with their children (I was not in attendance at this meeting).
- The session began with Danya calling the children, with a song, into a circle, where they held hands with each other and the teaching staff (four adults). The children were clearly familiar with the routine, and quickly formed the circle, many of them joining in with the song. Danya went through a series of songs with actions – about being together, and songs themed to winter and the coming of spring. Almost all the children joined in with the actions to the songs, and most joined in with the singing. The spring songs were new to them, but they quickly picked up the actions, e.g. with the snowdrop song. They were all attentive and relaxed. The circle was then broken, and the children had about five minutes of free play before the session resumed.
- Danya used another song to draw the children back to her, and the table that she had ready with props for her story. The children quickly gathered around, and sat quietly as Danya announced the start of the story time with a song and a xylophone. The children followed the story of a tree, a fairy and an imp (all supported with small props) very carefully, and were very quiet and attentive throughout. The xylophone and a song finished the story, and all the children and adults went back into a circle for the goodbye song.
- Following the visit, written feedback was provided, and suggestions were made for evaluating the project:

Use Danya's written feedback on each session.

Get adult staff to keep diaries of children's response to, and use of, elements of story time. For example, when they notice role play based on the stories during the children's free play; or the use of language or song that staff feel originates in story time.

Follow up some story time sessions by working with the children getting them to give their reflections and thoughts on the events, songs, and story. For example, the children could draw the story, and staff could write the children's descriptions of their drawings down.

Follow up conversations with the class, split into smaller groups, enabling each child to talk about how they see the experience. These could be recorded on paper, or as audio recordings.

All this activity could be focused on the aims and purpose of the project, but outcomes that do not match the aims should also be recorded, to give as complete as possible a picture of the project.

2.5. Visit to Stivichall Primary School, 21 March 2007.

- As requested by Lesley Whelan, I attended a meeting at Stivichall Primary School to lead evaluation support with CP teachers. This took the form of the 'Working with Children as Researchers' session. As before, the session was built around the training pack, a copy of which was provided for each teacher.

2.6. Visit to St Bart's Primary School, and follow-up support, 9/10 May 2007.

- Following a request from Russell Hogben at St Bart's CofE Primary School to help plan summative assessment activities and evaluation of the 'Global Imaging' CP project, I visited the school. My initial input had been advice on baseline data gathering. The PAF gives full details of the 'Global Imaging' project.
- I met with Russell Hogben at St. Bart's at 14.30, Wednesday, 9th May. We discussed the project, and evidence gathered to date. Russell Hogben identified a number of problems with the implementation of the project, and its evaluation. In addition, we discussed the success of the project.

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- Problems with the project: (i) there were difficulties with one of the outside 'creatives' (a contracted artistic support worker) who was unwilling to fit into the project as envisaged by St Bart's. Finally, her proposals for project development were rejected outright by the entire teaching staff of the school, and the contract was ended. (ii) There was a feeling that CP Coventry were too 'Napoleonic' in their desire to manage projects in the schools. The school's view was that it should have greater autonomy, and that a more effective use of 'creatives' might be to help extend the skills of school staff; although it was acknowledged that this would mean INSETs, and time was an issue here. (iii) In terms of the future direction of CP style projects, teaching and learning, it was felt that the school Leadership Team would have to take a clearer directing role.
 - Success with the project: (i) greatly enjoyed by the children, especially the 'Culture Mornings', when children were combined into themed, mixed year groups. (ii) The school had, in the previous academic year, undergone a change in its teaching structure, with combined year group teams being disbanded. As a result, there was a feeling of isolation among the teaching staff. The 'Global Imaging' project helped bring staff together, with a common teaching task. This was seen to have been very beneficial.
 - Evaluation data gathering. The generation of baseline data had been a bit patchy, with some baseline data (such as 6 pupils of differing reading/writing abilities from each class) being only partially collected. Nonetheless, there was a core of such data available. The task was now to gather end of project data, and I was asked to help in the design of evaluation tools.
 - Following the meeting with Russell Hogben, I was asked to address the staff meeting on creative teaching and learning in schools, the DfES, DCMS, and OfSTED views, and the two projects that have been carried out at St Bart's. This was done in a fifteen minute slot, after which Russell Hogben briefed the staff on the next stage of the evaluation and on the 'World Day' event planned for 23 May at the school.
 - Following my visit to St Bart's I designed a number of evaluation tools for the project, which were sent, by e-mail and post, to Russell Hogben on 11 May. These included:

i. a questionnaire schedule that children from Russell Hogben's class could use in their role as researchers when interviewing other children and staff about their participation in 'Global Imaging'.

ii. differentiated tasks for children in Reception and Y1 (teacher led, big sheet based), Y2 (group work), Y3-Y6 (individual work) that would enable assessment of reading, writing, understanding, all based on specialist vocabulary used in the Global Imaging project

3. Concluding points.

- There appear to be wide variations in the experiences and practice of schools in relation to CP projects.
- There is a feeling among certain schools that, having successfully completed initial CP projects, the schools should now have a high level of autonomy in deciding the path of future creative teaching and learning projects.
- Some schools are pro-active in seeking research support, while others do not feel the need for this support, and/or do not seek it.
- Wider school priorities, primarily associated with curriculum demands and, for secondary, schools, GCSE targets, overshadow, often to a great extent, the place of CP projects in schools. There is evidence that, in some secondary schools, the result is that CP projects have a limited effect in terms of the reach of the projects, or the future of projects in those schools.
- Where members of the SMT are already involved in CP projects in schools, this involvement has continued. However, there is little evidence that schools have the capacity to develop standing CP teams which are fully integrated with the SMT structure.

Appendix 2: Summary of school and Home Group contact for Dr D. Hartas.**Introduction:**

For the academic year 06-07, I managed to liaise and hold meetings with six out of the 10 schools assigned to me. The schools are: Finham Park, Finham primary, Stivichall, Edgwick, St Mary's and Benedict's school and Deedmore. Despite sending several emails and liaising with colleagues, including the creative advisers, in homegroup meetings, I did not meet with the other four schools on an individual basis (the only meetings I had took place during homegroup gatherings).

Overall, good research progress has been made in schools I have worked with. It is a shared view that teachers feel more confident as researchers in terms of undertaking research projects, and reflecting on the ways in which research has informed their practice. Having said this, they still require support with the methodological issues (eg, how to analyse video data; identifying emerging themes and organising the results), awareness of theory (eg, existing studies in the field – the wider context of research), the process of interpreting /writing up the results, and last but not least the sharing of the research.

1. Current research focus / question in my schools :**1.1. Finham Park.**

Finham Park's research question focuses on the use of physical space as a vehicle to support creative ways of learning and offering pastoral support. This is approached from the perspective of language, in that language cuts across curriculum. More specifically, during a structured creative activity, video data were collected on the discussions that children had with their peers and teachers. Linguistic and communicative interactions were analysed along the lines of adult-initiated interaction. For example, open-ended questions with the aim to engage the kids in dialogue; directed questions with the aim to get response from an individual pupil (similar to question-answer formats seen in the classroom); and specific questions directed to groups of children. As a sub-question, they are interested in children's use of language during conflict / disagreement (do they negotiate, provide alternative

strategies, trying to persuade others, etc) or how do they use language to monitor they work and collaborate with the others in a group.

1.2. Stivichall School.

In Stivichall school, the research question refers to delineating the impact of creativity on children's learning, as well as on school ethos and the culture among staff. Impact is understood in terms of cummulativeness and changing the culture of doing things, rather than a set of targets to be achieved. Impact is thus approached / located within the interaction between staff and pupils, as well as the overall ethos of the school.

The umbrella term 'emotional / social literacy', can be broken down in terms of

- understanding and demonstration of empathy or the ability to take others' perspective and become aware of signs of distress or emotional discomfort;
- feeling secure and willing to explore the environment;
- giving a voice to children and their families, by creating a school environment that is participatory and democratic;
- valuing diversity in the community;
- supporting children to develop language and communication skills that are particularly important for social adjustment and emotional maturity such as social problem solving skills (eg, negotiation strategies, offering advice to resolve conflict), emotion vocabulary to enable children to express frustration and other negative feelings appropriately and storytelling.
- developing a context that will offer the opportunity for modelling the above-mentioned skills, eg, circle time, nurture groups, sessions with an artist

1.3. Deedmore School.

At Deedmore School, the main research question is to challenge current understandings of inclusion, and explore the process of adapting school structures through creative practices to achieve participation of pupils and their families. Or, in other words, the need to adapt schools structures to promote creativity as a route to inclusion. At this stage, data on the impact of creative practices on pupils have been collected and discussed. The focus has been on the following dimensions:

- Children's participation;
- Their awareness of and responses to adults; and other children
- Imagination; and

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- Ability to express themselves through Drama

The next phase of research at Deedmore involves delineating ways that current interpretations of inclusion are challenged through the creative practices at school; and delineating the process of adapting the school structures in order to create an inclusive ethos in terms of physical environment, curriculum, school development plan, ways of involving parents, staffing levels.

1.4. *Finham Primary School.*

At Finham Primary, the research project is on developing writing skills, including handwriting in four year groups, nursery, Reception, Y1 and Y2.

They have collected baseline data at the start of each year, as well as post -test data at the end of the year numerical data. Each session with the artists was evaluated with data being collected about the activities / provocations, children's responses to them, as well as examples of their writing collected during and after the creative sessions.

1.5. *Edgwick School.*

At Edgwick School, the main aim of their research has been articulated in terms of looking at the effects that the process of re-structuring of the environment has on children's language. In this case, re-structuring of the environment refers to changes in the physical and social space in the classroom, including the creation of a book corner, a light box for writing and a mark making area.

With regard to language, the focus is on vocabulary development; curriculum-based language, such as words and phrases that are consistent with the foundation curriculum; teacher-student interactive language; pupil-to-pupil language; explanatory language use (using language as a self monitoring mechanism to articulate what they do not understand and request for clarification; and asking and answering questions.

A similar project has been running by Debs, focusing on developing children's language and communication skills through experiential learning activities. The notion of experiential learning was understood in terms of the

- Physical environment (inside and outside the classroom), in that language is seen in connection to the environment (certain environment structures facilitate / create opportunities for language and communication skills, others do not)

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- Parental engagement to create language learning opportunities across school and home contexts
 - Engage children in hands-on activities and observe their language use during these interactions

So, the overall theme of the research question at Edgwick is the development of language skills mediated by changes in the physical environment.

1.6. Sts Mary's and Benedict's School.

At Sts Mary's and Benedict's School, the focus of the research question is on developing children's emotional literacy, and ways of supporting inclusion through creative practices. In this context, inclusion is approached from a social / emotional point of view. This is a particularly innovative angle in that much research on inclusion focuses on the learning / educational dimension of inclusion, with little emphasis given on its social /emotional aspects.

2. Partnership between research mentors and schools:

With regard to establishing a team of staff keen to understand more about how to research and evaluate creative learning, minimum progress has been made. In the majority of the schools, there seems to be the case of an individual teacher undertaking the research. Although there is a consensus that CP projects are part of the developmental plan of the school, in practice, this is not always the case. The good news is that the nature of the research questions, and most importantly, the creative sessions with artists do operate at a whole-school basis.

In my meetings with schools, I worked with individual teachers, rather than establishing a partnership between research mentors, and the school research team, including a SMT member. In one particular school, ie, Stivichall, I had the opportunity to talk to other teachers and SMT members, because I carried out a mini-evaluation of the creative sessions that took place at school. Through this process, I was in a better position to discuss with colleagues about CP impact at a whole-school level.

3. Embedding CP in schools:

In terms of embedding CP research projects in the wider context of the school, Finham Park offers an example. The staff at school are in the process of linking CP with the Opening Minds project which, thus far, has achieved the development of the content of the curriculum but has not developed any alternative / creative ways of delivering it. Thus, CP-related projects are seen as capable of contributing in addressing issues of curriculum delivery, focusing on classroom talk (the ways in which language is used in the class room for learning and pastoral development, for example, questioning, pupil participation / volunteering answers, quality of vocabulary used, quality of arguments offered, language use for problem solving); social interaction of the group as a whole (issues of collaborative learning, social cohesiveness of the group, teacher-initiated interaction); collaborative teaching teams and the diverse workforce in the classroom; and involvement of outside agencies.

4. Nature of research support:

In the six schools I worked with, mainly, the type of advice offered / requested on the design of research activity on CP projects had to do with making sense out of the data already collected. Staff found it challenging to translate data into meaning and the implications for practice. Information about current research studies in the school's research area was given to school teams, mainly at two phases of their research: the development of the research questions; and the interpretation / writing up of results. In my view, the theoretical input is important to ensure that the research that takes place in schools is placed within the wider theoretical context, to challenge a common misconception that research is just an accumulation of activities without any underlying thread.

5. Finding a platform for research sharing:

More targeted support should be given to school research teams in finding platforms for sharing learning with wider groups of school staff. This has been achieved partially during the home group meetings; nevertheless, more work is required in this area. Linking projects together and offering opportunities to teachers to visit and

observe each others' settings and work patterns are essential to ensure the long-term impact of CP. Result from their research should be shared and cross-examined in order to become internalized by them to make a real difference in classroom everyday practice. Also, there are common themes and issues emerged across schools, and thus, insights gained in one school may be useful in other schools as well, avoiding duplication of practice. The reality in schools is that teachers have a very limited time to go beyond the process of collecting / organising data and start drawing the important issues for their own teaching, as well as share them.

The home group as a vehicle for sharing research and raising awareness of each others' practice has been useful but not very effective. Although it offers the opportunity for teachers to come together and, informally, discuss their research, its remit with regard to sharing research-informed practice seems to be limited. Perhaps the use of structured tasks may facilitate this process. In some home group meetings, the discussion became more substantial when a structured task was set, e.g., bring a canvass to tell a story of what creativity means in your school and the ways of expressing it. Moreover, the introduction of structured tasks such as presentations of research data and results; bringing tangible evidence / artefacts constructed from the research findings / work that are used in classroom / playground; discussions on the impact of creative sessions on children's learning and school ethos and future research directions may facilitate home group meetings. These activities can be delivered individually or collectively, especially for schools that explore similar issues. Moreover, the development of a newsletter or any other publication to create a public space where discussions, views and research activities and classroom practice are distilled and shared, may form a platform for cross fertilization and debate.

6. The effectiveness of the role of research mentors:

Overall, for the schools that are involved in research, mentoring has been useful, especially in assisting them making sense of their data, reflecting on the implications of the research result for their own practice, and having the opportunity to discuss ideas for further research. For schools that are still apprehensive of research and have less of a capacity to engage with it, the research mentor role has not been effective. However, having said this, we believe that, in these schools, there are systemic issues that need to be addressed before we offer research mentoring. In

this case, systemic issues refer to the priorities of the school and the SMT views on building research capacity, and most crucially the status that is given to research in these schools.

Discussions with the creative advisers have been fruitful in terms of bringing together CP and research mentors' views. Liaison between creative advisers and research mentors should become an important part of the research mentor role, and perhaps the platform for supporting research sharing and dissemination.