

Creative Arts, Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools



Somerset
Council





Cover: Taken from the Fuse Performance and Emerald Ant Inside Out Arts project
This page: Taken from the Spaeda and sen.se Bolder and Braver project

An abstract light painting on a black background. A bright white hand is visible on the left, with several long, flowing, magenta-colored lines extending from it across the frame. There are also some faint green and blue light trails in the background.

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About the project

Mental health issues affect nearly half of the global population at some point in their lives, and especially after the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Creative arts are thought to help our mental health and wellbeing, allowing us to transfer our stresses, anxieties and more on to the page, canvas, screen or in to performance.

This project looks to examine the relationship between the creative arts, mental health and wellbeing in children and young people, asking the question 'Does art support positive mental health and wellbeing in schools?'

In partnership with Somerset County Council Public Health, a Young Person's Champion worked with creatives and schools around Somerset to find out about the impact that creative arts has on the mental health and wellbeing of the children and young people at those schools. The young person's champion ensured that young people's voices and views were central to the wellbeing project, documenting and capturing the process.

The creatives involved with the project ran a series of creative arts sessions with children and young people. Using mental health themes the young people produced a variety of different types of creative arts and shared their thoughts on how producing art made them feel.

In addition, the Somerset County Council youth voice groups, the Somerset in Care Council (SiCC) and the Somerset Leaving Care Council (SLCC) ran some graffiti creative art events.

This electronic magazine known as an E-Zine is the culmination of the project, collecting details of the sessions, as well as the findings and views of the young people who participated.



The Pillars of Wellbeing

The framework for this project are the Pillars of Wellbeing, these are the elements that contribute to our mental health and wellbeing.

Belonging

Healthy Relationships

Healthy Lifestyles

“ It was great to hear from the creatives themselves about the different ways in which their exercises and practices helped schools, teachers and pupils involved in the project. ”

Chloe Raeburn,
Young Person's Champion



Creative organisations partnered with

The following organisations were involved in this project:

- Emerald Ant
- Fuse Performance
- Sen.se
- Somerset Art Works
- Somerset Film
- SPAEDA
- LIFEbeat



Young Person's Champion - Health, Wellbeing and Creative Arts

Chloe was the young person's champion for health, wellbeing and creative arts. Her role involved talking to artists and young people and getting a feel for young people's opinions when it comes to health, wellbeing and the creatively arts.

Chloe has personal experience of being in care. Before this role she did a level 2 health and social care course at Wiltshire college which came from of passion of wanting to help children and young people when it comes to mental health issues. Chloe's ideal role would be a support/youth worker in the mental health field.

Schools visited

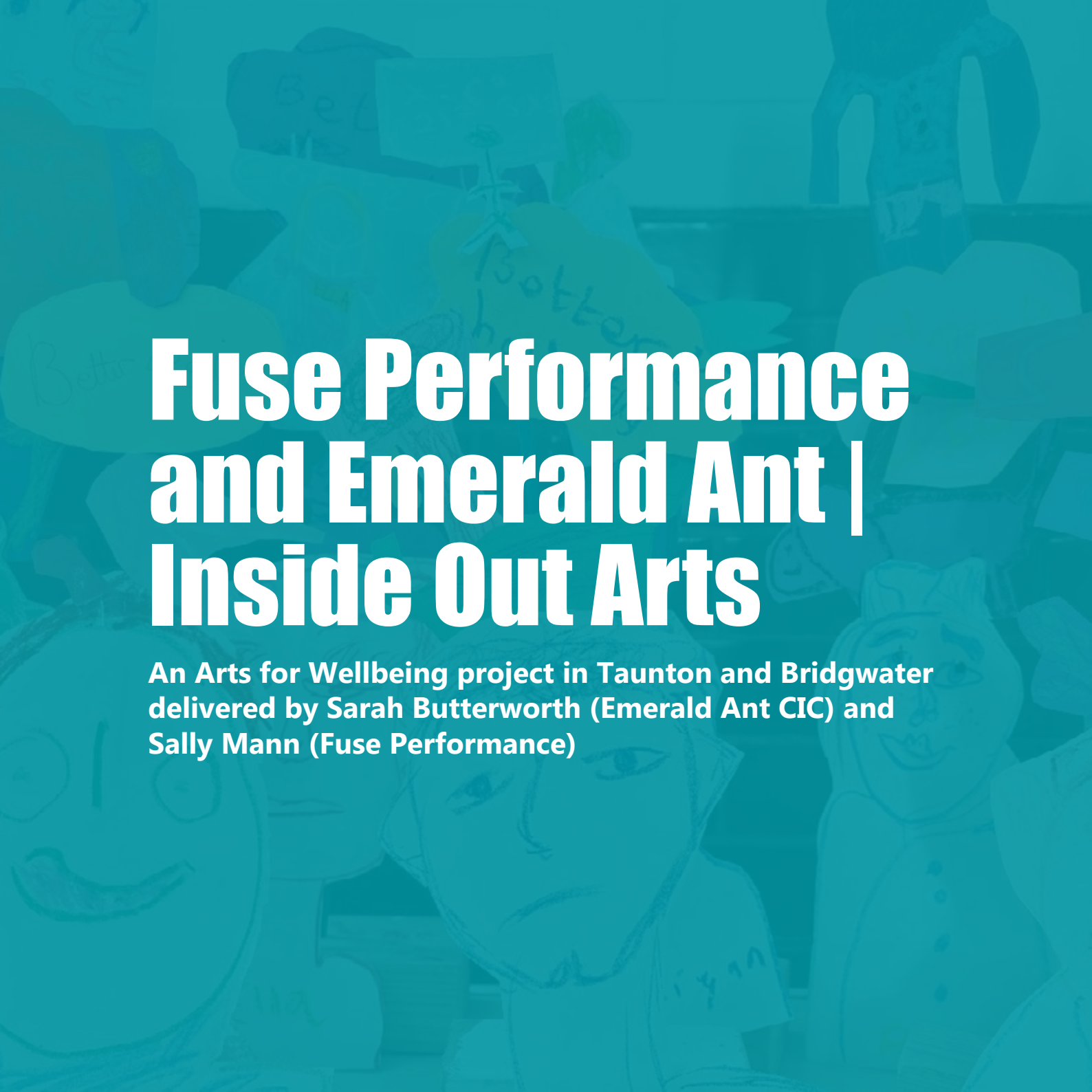
We had over 50 schools participate in this project, each visited by an artist in residence.

[Click here to see a full list of the schools involved](#)

Commencing in early 2022, the Young Person's 'Health & Wellbeing and the Creative Arts' Champion, was a nine-month supported traineeship, for a Care Leaver that worked in the Somerset County Council Partnership and Engagement team in Children's Social Care, with a wider team including Public Health, schools, colleges, artists in residence, the Leaving Care service, young people and more.

Their role involved visiting creative arts sessions at schools across Somerset, participating in the day, as well as talking to students and workers about the creative arts sessions and how it impacted on their mental health and wellbeing. They would also take the learnings from these sessions and talk to groups of care leavers about their findings, trying out some creative work and get their feedback about how this might improve the emotional and mental wellbeing of other care leavers in Somerset. The findings from all of these sessions would then be recorded digitally.

Throughout this E-Zine you will see the details of these sessions, the creatives involved, the artwork created by young people, as well as statements from workers and young people.

The background is a teal-colored collage of various children's drawings. These include simple line drawings of faces with different expressions, some with names like 'Ryan' written below them. There are also drawings of figures, possibly representing people or animals, and some abstract shapes. The drawings are layered and overlap, creating a textured, artistic background.

Fuse Performance and Emerald Ant | Inside Out Arts

**An Arts for Wellbeing project in Taunton and Bridgwater
delivered by Sarah Butterworth (Emerald Ant CIC) and
Sally Mann (Fuse Performance)**

Inside Out Arts is an arts based project funded by Somerset County Council, Public Health and is a partnership project between Fuse Performance and Emerald Ant.

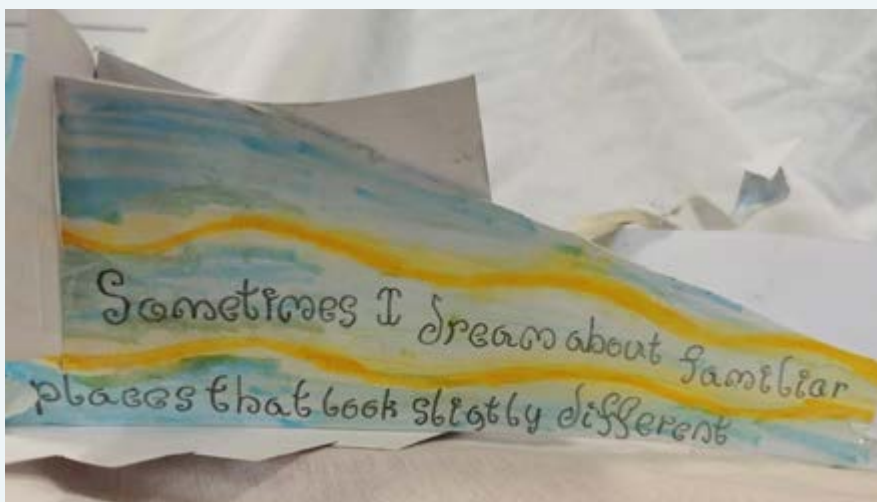
Totems for ourselves

Year 7 children created small sculptures for themselves over the 5 week programme. Each week the group focused on a theme such as **sleep, anxiety and anger management**, created their own intentions and then wrote those down onto the shapes below, which were then decorated and constructed together.



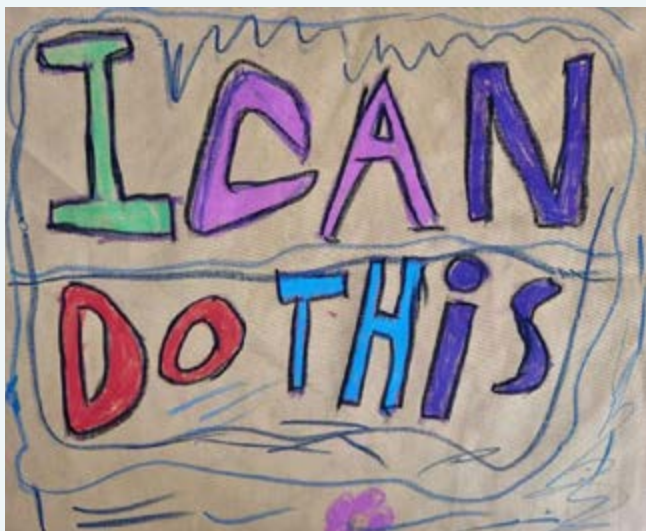
Totems to a friend

These were created by a group of children from Years 3, 4, 5, 6. They worked in a pair with someone they didn't know, drew their portrait and then got to know them through asking a series of questions, such as favourite colour, favourite animal and favourite thing in nature. They then drew those things and put them together on a totem. The final questions were about what the other person aspired to be and setting of a short term goal. These were also included as images of writing. The totems were then gifted to each other, together with a discussion about giving and receiving, friendships and bullying.



Affirmations for ourselves

These were done in all schools. Affirmations are positive statements that can be repeated in one's head, like a mantra. When they are used a lot, they can replace negative thought patterns. These affirmations were drawn onto pieces of fabric 40 x 30 cm, and then given to the children to take home for their bedrooms.



“ Very useful to children who were needing some extra nurturing and support in expressing feelings and emotions. Very calm and relaxing sessions. ”

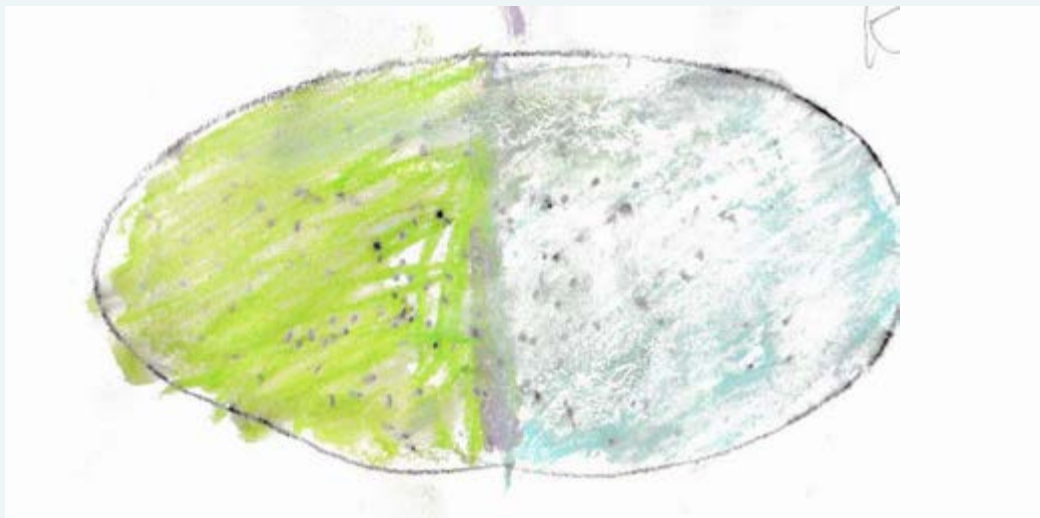
“ Children came back with positive attitude. ”

Teacher, Eastover



A worry

Children drew a massive squiggle on a big sheet of paper. They were then invited to find a shape and visualise what a worry they have might look like. When the group had finished they decided what to do with the paper, some decided to destroy it, some cut out their worries and put them into their books.

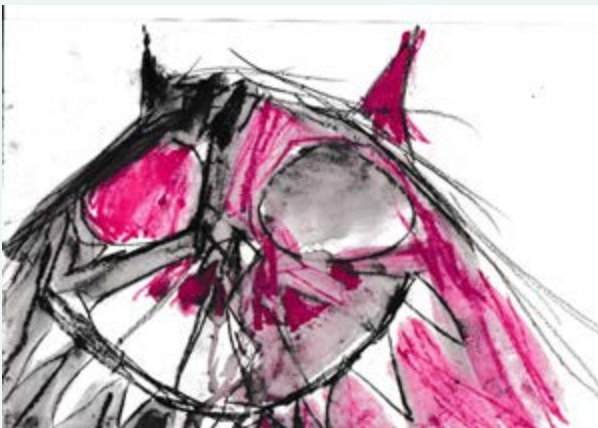


Painting to music

This was a really good calming exercise. It worked well at the beginning of sessions to focus the group and bring them into a safe and creative setting.



Trying to imagine what anger looks like



“ I’m not alone with the worries I have. ”

“ I think the session on worries helped me so I can think of techniques to calm myself. ”

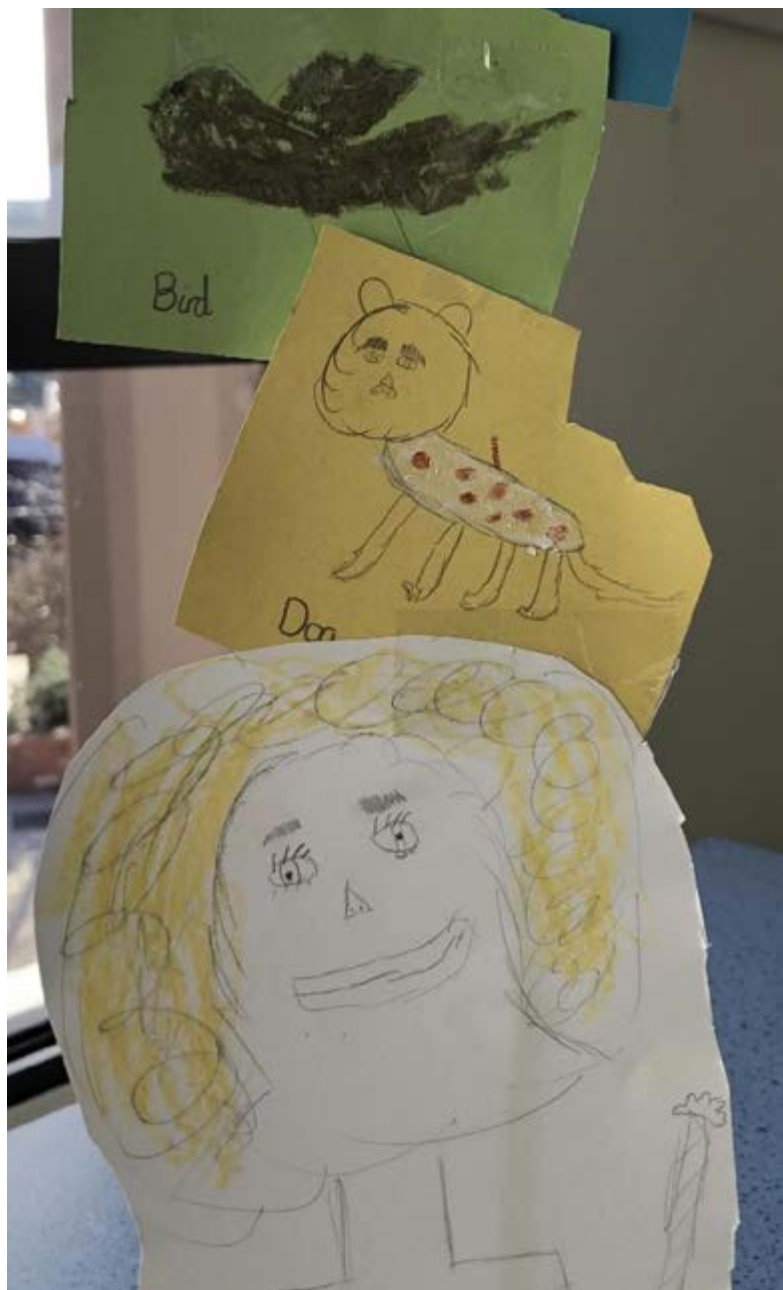
Quotes from young people

Sharing common experience after COVID-19



“ Very worthwhile for the group of children who suffer with anxiety and for some learning how to regulate their emotions – Just getting children to talk and making that time for them in a very busy curriculum. ”

Teacher, Eastover



Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Training Day

By Chloe Raeburn

Chloe participated in a CPD Training Day with teachers in Bridgwater, as well as Sarah Butterworth and Sally Mann from Fuse and Emerald Ant. The next couple of pages are her report from the day.

An Introduction to the Day

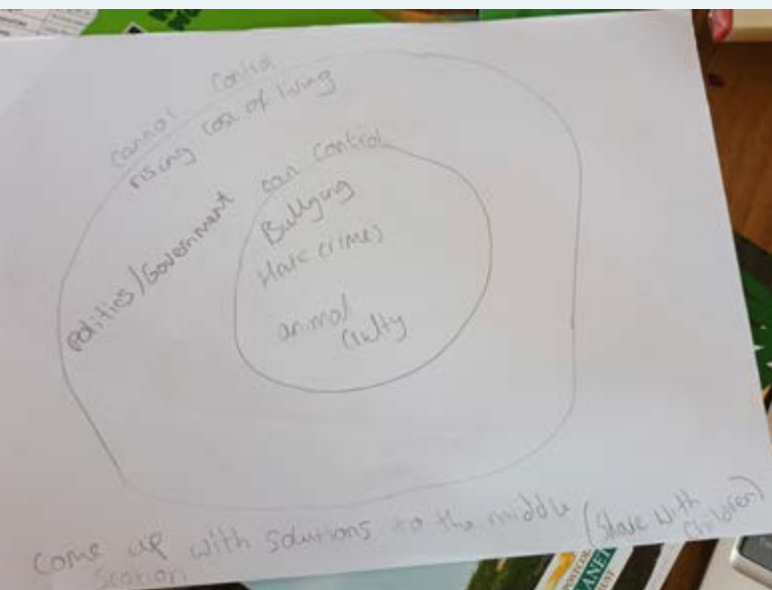
Today was a train journey to Bridgwater for the CPD training with the teachers. Sarah Butterworth and Sally Mann from Fuse and Emerald Ant were running the session today. We all went round in a circle and introduced ourselves and our roles. Lots of local teachers from around the Bridgwater area were in attendance (mainly primary school ones) and had come to learn about the different activities that have used throughout the project from Fuse and Emerald Ant.

Activities from the Day

Names and Colours - This was the first activity of the day, as this broke the ice and got us talking about feelings associated with colours. I chose orange, mainly because I feel like it is a neutral colour, and I wasn't feeling happy, and I wasn't feeling sad. I was in the middle. By the end of the session my colour had change to a pink since I had learnt a lot and retained a lot of knowledge within those couple of hours.

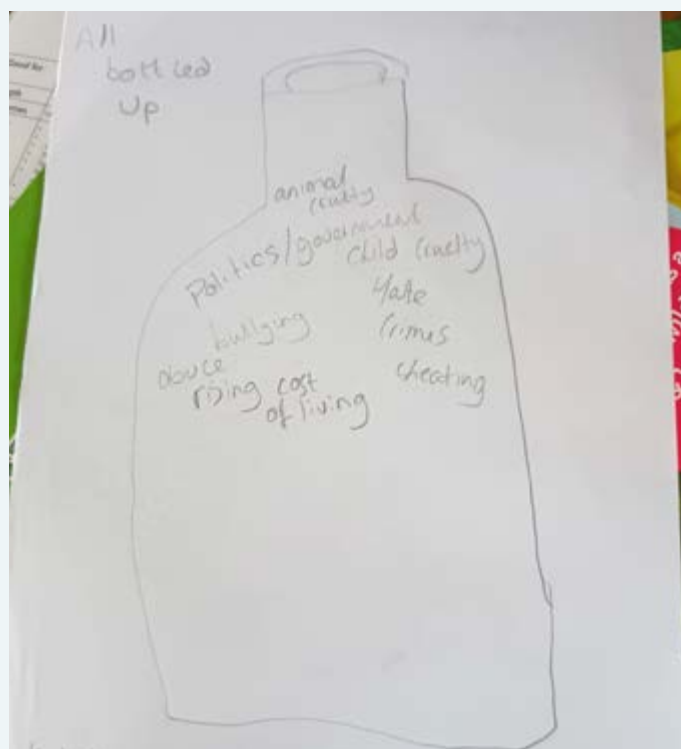
It was great to hear from the creatives about the different ways in which their exercises and practices helped schools, teachers and pupils involved in the project reacted and the results of the work. I was partnered with Jo which was good because as someone who is already heavily involved with the project, she felt a natural fit to work with. Then we did a couple of activities from the "Art for wellbeing in the classroom" book. Which was very helpful to look through. Below are some of the activities we tried out:

Worry Circles - are helpful to identify what you can and cannot control in your life. With the outer circle what you cannot control, and the inner circle what you can. With the inner circle and what you can control you can try and come up with solutions to your situation or problem. I found this one to be one of the more creative activities as writing it down and



visually seeing the circle helps me break it down a bit more for me.

All Bottled Up - drawing a bottle and writing all the things down that make you angry. The task was very simple but effective and is another visual artform that could be used to help identify what children and young people feel and the message it sends is that you should feel comfortable enough to share your worries and your angers with someone you trust or someone you feel comfortable sharing with. Do not leave situations or circumstances "bottled up" and unresolved. It's better to write them down in



a creative way so that you can work through them methodically until eventually the bottle is not needed and its all out in the open.

Stretch Bands - This had to be my favourite activity out of all of them. It involved moving around a lot and getting the muscles going. And, a lot of partner work/teamwork was needed as you have to be strong in order to tense and release. I had the honour of partnering up with Jo Leek. We had lot of fun with trying different movement styles. We tried up in the air, down to the ground, we did a lot of twists and turns and eventually we got the hang of the resistance exercise. I would have loved to have done it for longer as it really did help my muscles to relax. It was near the start of the session anyway so we were able to continue feeling a lot better within ourselves, This exercise I think would be great in P.E lessons as it teaches us about strength, teamwork and the ability to release and tense up which is what a lot of sports require.

Right at the end of the session we spoke to a few people, and it was good to get a flavour of what everyone does and to meet people specifically in nature and wildlife gardening because nature is always helpful for mental health reasons. I took away a lot of information and leaflets that I may pick out bits of information and use in the E-Zine. All in all this session was really helpful in the sense that I really felt like Fuse and Emerald Ant have worked really hard to produce some amazing practices that other schools might take on board and use and this may be a legacy which is really exciting for children, young people and schools.

Somerset Art Works | Really Looking / Really Listening / Really Feeling

Somerset Art Works has been working with ten schools in South Somerset and Somerset West and Taunton as part of an extensive Arts & Wellbeing Project commissioned by Somerset County Council's Public Health Team.

Working with clusters of schools in South Somerset, Somerset West and Taunton and our InspirED partners Somerset Film, artists Richard Tomlinson and Julia Mckenzie worked with pupils to create artworks inspired by the natural environment: really looking / really listening / really feeling, all linked with the theme of Belonging.



“ By making art you begin to understand that mistakes are not mistakes, they are experiments, and this philosophy can be applied to all aspects of life. The physical process of making things and using your hands is good for the mind and body. On this project pupils collaborated with each other to produce their artworks. They played games and worked in teams as well as working individually. This way of working improved their confidence and resilience, made them less precious and more spontaneous. ”

Somerset Art Works



Creative workshops

Creative workshops focused on building confidence and resilience, encouraging creative thinking, cooperation and collaboration. Pupils were encouraged to try new things, working together really creatively whilst having fun. Being creative supports the individual's ability to solve problems, be resilient and collaborate. This, in turn, helps the individual's wellbeing. By making art you begin to understand that mistakes are not mistakes, they are experiments, and this philosophy can be applied to all aspects of life. The physical process of making things and using your hands is good for the mind and body. On this project participants collaborated with each other to produce their artworks. They played games and worked in teams as well as working individually. This way of working improved their confidence, made them less precious and more spontaneous.



Really looking / really listening / really feeling

This short film details the creative workshops run by Somerset Art Works and Somerset Film.

[Click here to watch the film](#)



Showcasing art work

Pupils' artwork was showcased during **Somerset Art Weeks Festival** in Sept/Oct 2022 and at family/ community celebrations at the hub schools and community settings (eg Public Library, Village Hall and Church). Some artworks will remain on permanent display in school buildings.



LIFEbeat | School Arts Project

Funded by the Somerset County Council, the School Arts Project was run by LIFEbeat and commissioned to deliver the project within the Mendips and South Somerset.

LIFEbeat's mission is to improve the mental health, wellbeing and positive potential of young people through building creative communities and a sense of belonging.

Five half day sessions were delivered across 14 schools ranging from Key Stages one to three, where theatre practitioners Nick White and Rachel Cohen used theatre and drama as a way to explore self-care and healthy lifestyles.

Bruton Primary School

All of the children were notably calmer and more relaxed during the activity focusing on shape and colour lying on the ground outside.

At the end of the day the children felt a significant sense of accomplishment and pride.

Looking and discussing the four questions regarding the shape activities all children fed back that they felt a lot happier and more positive, although some were tired after a day full of activities.



“ My relationship to self-care is like an elevator- it can go up and down. It looks fine on the outside but it is bad on the inside. ”

Student

Ansford and Upton Noble

In both schools, most children participated in the workshops. Generally, at the beginning of the day they were more quiet and reserved, but towards the end of the workshop they were louder and more opinionated.

Whilst doing the Step into the Circle questions game, usually about 60-70% of the pupils felt happy, connected to friends and school. There were always a few pupils that didn't feel that way though. This was roughly the same at the beginning of the workshop as at the end.

Wincanton Primary School Performance Piece and Visual Art on the Theme of Belonging

By Chloe Raeburn

Chloe shares her experiences of working directly with the creatives on a session with young people at Wincanton Primary School.

The Start of the Day

After arriving at Wincanton Primary School, I signed in and received my visitor badge and was then taken to the Apollo classroom which already had the year fives in. We were then introduced to the children where Rachel and Nick explained who they were and what they would be doing.

The Session

Working with the children, we wrote down some goals for the session. I was impressed at the words that the children came up with.

We then did a couple of physical movement activities which got the children thinking and moving, then regrouped and split into four groups. We wrote down ideas of what belonging means and chose four sentences out of all the ideas to make into a poem "I need to...". We practiced acting out each sentence as a freeze frame and worked out the order. The children performed them in front of each other so that they could see all the different approaches to the task.

After lunch, we went outside and did a couple of circle games to get the brains going again and

it was interesting to see how some were fully engaged with this and others were not. We got in to groups again, this time it was two groups each. One was performing while the other group watched and then swapped. Then we regrouped and showed each other with added moves and speech that Nick told them to do. Went back to the classroom and sat back down in a circle evaluated whether the goals had been achieved today.

We discussed the plans for the next performance, then once the session ended we went back to the staffroom to talk about the day we had we concluded that we were impressed with the vocabulary of the children in the school.

My final thoughts about this day are that I was really impressed with the vocabulary that the children were using. I found that the session went quickly once we were getting to the creative part of working out how we were going to use freeze frames. It's not easy getting 7-9-year-olds to concentrate for long so that is why I felt this was challenging for some of them especially for my group when we did the "gaming" frame which was my personal favourite freeze frame.



Spaeda and sen.se | Bolder and Braver

**Using art and creativity as a therapeutic tool,
Bolder and Braver seeks to empower young
learners with additional needs, giving them
opportunities to reflect as well as new skills to
raise their aspirations and better equip them
for living their best adult life.**

The pandemic had a dramatic impact on children and young people's cognitive development and mental health. Those with additional needs were amongst the hardest hit.

Spaeda have partnered with artists and sen.se, the association that supports special schools and Pupil Referral Units across Somerset to help children and young people navigate their journey to recovery.



“ The workshop was a great success, the students engaged really well, some of our medical students experienced Art for the first time and loved it. I definitely think the make was a good fit and the artist also navigated the different students and their needs brilliantly. ”

Teacher, Tor School

Activities

It is hoped that creating together will help the young people explore emotions, develop self-awareness, cope with stress, boost self-esteem, and work on social skills. Art forms and techniques enjoyed have included:

- **Slow shutter** work painting with light and macro/close up **photographing nature**, piloting how to support photography in school on an ongoing basis
- **Portraiture** to explore career aspirations, passions and interests, develop a sense of self and identity as well as gain creative, marketing and digital skills
- **Collaging and plastic fusion** - re-using materials that would normally be thrown away to make fun/beautiful and saleable objects
- Revisiting **marbling skills** across school, **scraffito** and working with **metal laminate/collage on cork**
- Tasters in **mould making** and casting, experimental clay work and printing
- Developing **printmaking** skills through mark making, moving on to reduction /2 colour printing, understanding how artists work, looking at artist's sketchbooks, supporting and enhancing art and design curriculum



“ Inspired creativity through the therapeutic nature of the activities. Enabled ‘slowing down’ and being ‘in the now.’ ”

Feedback from the launch event

Health, Wealth & Happiness

sen.se - Project Launch

This animation, produced by sen.se, celebrates the launch of the Bolder and Braver project. Staff from special schools in Somerset, joined together for the project launch, around Health & Wellbeing.

[Click here to watch the film](#)



Bolder and Braver was devised in partnership by sen.se and Spaeda and builds on the learning from the sen.se 'pop up shops,' providing a platform to showcase outcomes and achievements through Young Somerset's **Bold and Brave** shop in Taunton.



Somerset Film Sedgemoor

Somerset Film delivered an arts-based wellbeing programme on the theme of Belonging. Through a series of hands-on photographic (mindful / portrait photography) and textile-based activities, the project explored body image and emotions.

Somerset Film's aim was to deliver sessions at Robert Blake School and then cascade the approach across the feeder primary schools through workshops and teacher / teaching assistant CPD.

The final work was exhibited to the public at The Engine Room in Bridgwater as part of Somerset Art Weeks. For some children it was their first time working with artists and textiles. The participating schools were encouraged to see their work in exhibition. One school even live streamed a 'virtual visit' into their classroom. All of the schools were keen to see the work returned for display there.



“ It was really fun.
It made me feel
happy because it was
relaxing. ”

“ I like art because
it makes me
feel good. ”

“ I enjoyed it because
I like to express
myself and show my
artistic side. ”

Students

Activities

Delivery of the sessions varied according to the educational setting and the needs of the young people involved. At Robert Blake delivery was in short sessions over five weeks for a smaller group of identified participants, whereas at primary schools it was a one-day workshop with an entire class. Using mindful photography techniques alongside the use of digital editing tools, participants created silhouettes and portraits capturing a range of emotions. The process provided an opportunity to discuss the feelings they experienced during the covid pandemic as well as other issues around self-image. They used the photographic images to create silhouettes which were then printed and transferred to either items of clothing, bunting or banners.





“ I am glad Richard came and taught me art because even though I’m good at it I’m even better at it now and also it calms me down when I’m sad. So, thank you. ”

“ I have enjoyed my time here and the project made me feel confident trying new things. ”

“ I really enjoyed ink art because my creativity went out flying. ”

Students



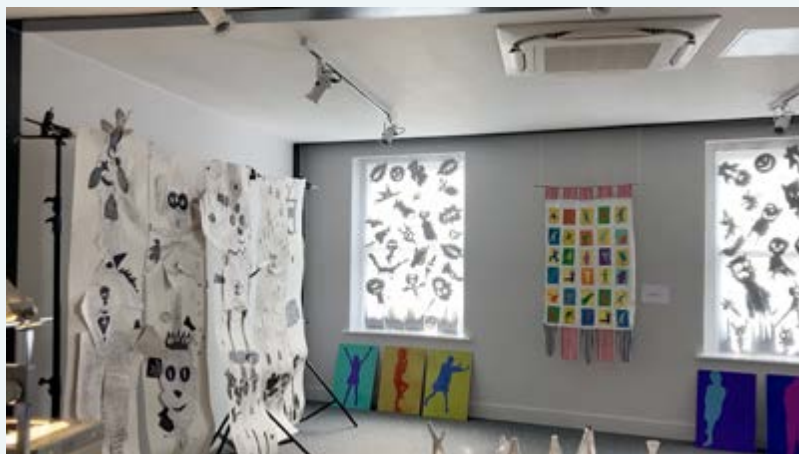
Working with the Creatives at The Engine Room

By Chloe Raeburn

Chloe helped creatives set up a session for young people at the Engine Room in Bridgwater, over the next couple of pages she shares her experiences of the day.

Travelling to the Engine Room

Once I had arrived at Bridgwater train station, I was a bit lost as I hadn't arrived at Bridgwater via train before (I had only previously travelled by bus to Bridgwater) so this was already going to be an interesting experience.



At the Engine Room

Once I got to the Engine Room, I was still early so I ordered a coffee and sat down until people started arriving. The people from Somerset Art Works were coming today to set up for an exhibition during the weekend. I was involved in helping them set up and then doing little interviews to find out about them and where their workshop ideas came from. Jan Ollis, Richard Tomlinson, and Julia McKenzie along with Deb Richardson were the creative people who were present at The Engine Room.

Our first task was to bring everything into the building and up the stairs to where the exhibition was going to be held. We then discussed what the plan was for the set up and where we were thinking of putting everything. Richard drew up a plan of what he thought each of the rooms were going to look like. The one upstairs was going to have the lanterns in the middle and all the other work around the edge or on the

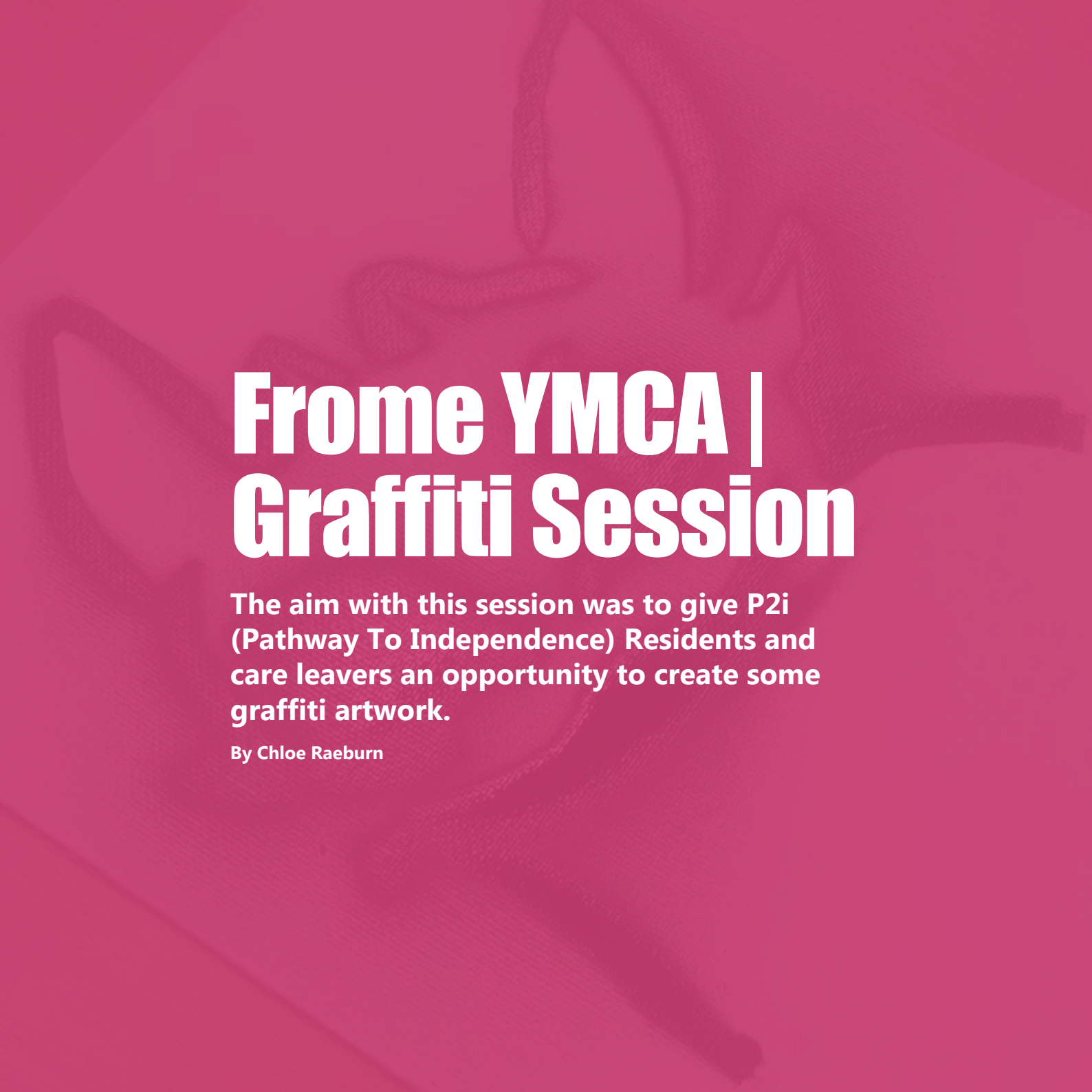


windows. Jan's work was going to be placed along the banisters and around the stairs, some were going to be put up along top part of the wall or stuck to long bit of metal.

We then organised what work we were going to place around. The "monster" artwork had to be chosen from each school involved so this took about 30-45 minutes to organise.

For the majority of the morning, I was with Jan, helping her set up her part of the exhibition. We then all went for lunch, and during this I found out more about each individual artist. I interviewed them and found out about their background in the field they work within. Then back to helping Jan finish setting up. This took the rest of the time as we had to keep adjusting and moving things around to make it look presentable and professional.



The background of the entire page is a solid magenta color. Overlaid on this background is a faint, light-colored illustration of a hand with the palm facing forward. A heart shape is drawn on the palm, and the fingers are slightly spread. The illustration has a soft, painterly texture.

Frome YMCA | Graffiti Session

The aim with this session was to give P2i (Pathway To Independence) Residents and care leavers an opportunity to create some graffiti artwork.

By Chloe Raeburn

This session was open to P2i Residents and care leavers at the YMCA in Frome, with ages ranging from 16-25 and was facilitated by Young Person's Champion Chloe Raeburn, Somerset County Council Participation and Engagement Officer Damien Erangey, manager of the YMCA in Frome Abbi, as well as other YMCA staff.

Activities

There were a couple of artistic tasks going on for the P2I and care leavers, creating a tote bag or designing a canvas. Both tasks involved taking a pre-cut stencil and placing it on either the tote or the canvas and spraying paint over the stencil. Once the stencil was removed, it revealed a unique piece of artwork to each young person that completed it.

It took a while for the P2I and care leavers to engage in the activity, a few of them had their own ideas about what they wanted to produce, some even had their own artwork they wanted to have on the tote bag or canvas which was very creative and showed out of the box thinking.



Impact

The impact of the event is that it definitely gets them in their creative mindset and away from whatever is going on for them mentally and physically or anything else they're going through. They loved using the stencils or creating their own ones. The session showed that being creative inspired the young people, helped them to come out of their shell, improved their mental health, as well as helped uplift their mood and above all else made them feel better about themselves.

Part of the session was to discuss does art support wellbeing? We all agreed that it did and that you don't have to be good at art for it to help but the doing of it, the action and process of being creative, even if it is just singing along to a song, is what is most important.



“ I feel art is much more than just therapy. For me it helps to my identity a voice and with that confidence. ”

Young Person

“ I have always used art to help with my mental health. What I love about it is it is so diverse. I can write a poem one day or draw the next. Whatever my mood art is always there, even listening to music helps. ”

Young Person



“ I draw a lot. It is a passion I have but it started to combat feeling lonely. Now it is much more than that and no matter how lazy or low I am, drawing changes me for the better. ”

Young Person



Children Looked After (CLA) Leaving Care Family Time Away Day @ Dillington House

On the 29th September 2022, we attended the CLA Leaving Care Family Time Away Day. It was a great opportunity for us to connect with those that work directly with children looked after, have them try out the graffiti activities and get their opinions on mental health, wellbeing and the creative arts.



“ I think it’s a sense of achievement which I think is always good for anyone’s mental health, that is a celebration for some care leavers. ”

Social Care Worker

“ Sometimes you can’t put things into words on paper or tell people things so sometimes doing a creative activity can help you express your feelings. ”

Social Care Worker





“ Art therapy calms our brains, it’s very therapeutic and I think it would benefit young people’s mental health enormously. ”

Social Care Worker



“ You can express yourself with the paint, you can either join in and show people why you’ve done it or keep it to yourself like a little keepsake about how your feeling on that day or what represents you or something like that. ”

Social Care Worker



Conclusion

After many sessions, working with six creative organisations, over 14 schools and with a huge amount of creative artwork generated by young people, do we believe that art supports mental health in schools?

Looking over the testimonies of young people, as well as staff and creatives, case studies and the artwork generated, although the activities and projects completed varied from creative, to class and session, there are certain patterns and words that come up: confidence, calm, collaboration, and cooperation. When we compare these to the pillars of wellbeing, each fits at least one of the pillars.

What learning has taken place?

Educators

Amongst our feedback from the sessions was this statement from a teacher: 'I remember talking to an anxious child after your session, she was the most confident I'd ever seen her', it speaks volumes about the impact creative arts have had on both the young people and their educators. Teachers talked about how much the young people had gotten out of the sessions, how it gave them an outlet to express their feelings, while also having fun. They found it useful for young people to express their emotions 'to talk and making that time for them in a very busy curriculum'.

Young People

Looking over the artwork generated by the young people, the chance to express themselves and their emotions creatively was a welcome one, especially coming off of the back of the isolation from the pandemic, with one young person telling us 'My voice does matter', showing how far their confidence has grown from participating in the sessions. It is also very clear that the young people gained from being able to share how they feel with other young people, knowing that others are going through the same things as them, as in this statement from a young person 'I'm not alone with the worries I have'.

Who has benefitted from this project?



Young People and Educators

Running the sessions in schools meant young people had the opportunity to participate in creative arts and learn new skills, both creatively and mindfully. In addition, teachers and educators had Continuing Professional Development (CPD) days, which offered them the chance to learn new approaches to be able to continue offering creative art sessions at school.

Young Person's Champion



Chloe Raeburn, our young person's champion for the project, was not in education, employment or training prior to this project in addition to being an opportunity for her to gain experience in full time employment, but also experience of being involved with a significant project that she could include on her CV for when she looked for her next role.

Professionals

The young people who worked with the creatives on this project helped social workers and leaving care workers, practitioners and participation staff to understand first hand the positive impact that engaging with creative art has on their mental health and wellbeing.





What legacy has been created through this project?

This E-Zine documents the work of this project, with examples of the artwork created, as well as a small selection of films generated by the creative organisations involved, statements and testimonials of the young people who participated as well as those of the educators present.

Being involved with the project has allowed educators to see first-hand the impact that creative arts have had on young people, and CPD days give educators the opportunity to carry this on into the future.

The Somerset in Care and Leaving Care Councils (SiCC and SLCC), inspired by the project have set up their own project group the SiCC and SLCC Creatives to use creative arts to get their voices heard, expressing their lived experiences, their needs, and things that they would like to change.

Does art support positive mental health in schools?

Looking through the testimonials from the young people, the creatives and the educators who participated, we can see clear evidence that having a creative outlet allows young people to share their

feelings, worries and concerns. Using a new medium, such as drawing, painting or performance, means that young people can express their feelings in a way that they possibly wouldn't have been able to vocalise before. By learning new skills and through experimental play, there has been a definite increase in confidence and resilience in young people, with educators noting that as the sessions went on, they became chattier, more open, and happier.

We've seen that when working in creative groups young people will be aware of shared experiences and feelings, which in turn helps them to feel less alone or isolated, and with that improves their levels of wellbeing.



The Art of Creative Arts, Mental Health and Wellbeing in Schools

So many wonderful pieces of art were generated by children and young people during this project, that it felt right to highlight as much as we could. This short film features a selection of that work.

[Click here to watch the film](#)



Emerald Ant

Emerald Ant is an arts organisation and Community Interest Company, working with schools and communities across Dorset and Southwest England.

Our projects culminate in big spectacular outdoor art that builds joyful collective memory and empowers communities.

www.emeraldant.com | crdirector@emeraldant.com



Fuse Performance, Outdoor Arts

Working together with artists, communities, cultural organisations, councils, in education and with businesses Fuse Performance produces exceptional events and imaginative projects, performances and productions.

www.fuse.org.uk | events@fuseperformance.co.uk
01458 259 638



LIFEbeat

LIFEbeat's mission is to improve the mental health, wellbeing and positive potential of young people through building creative communities and a sense of belonging. They give young people the skills and inspiration to: Overcome the challenges they face; Navigate the divisions in society; Lead confident, healthy and purposeful lives.

www.lifebeat.uk | info@lifebeat.co.uk | 07557 349 005



sen.se

(Special Educational Needs. Somerset Expertise)

A collaborative partnership between all of the special schools and specialist provision within Somerset. They are committed to making a difference and enriching the lives of students and their families. All children are unique and because of this they help with advice and support until the right provision is found.

www.sen-se.org.uk | info@sen-se.org.uk | 07702 593684



Somerset Art Works

Part of the Arts Council England's National Portfolio of funded organisations for 2018-2022. SAW want Somerset to be a place where people expect to engage with excellent visual art that is surprising and distinctive. We initiate a wide range of projects in a variety of settings, working in partnership with other arts and non-arts organisations, supporting the artists who enrich our lives and always integrating artists' professional development.

**www.somersetartworks.org.uk
admin@somersetartworks.org.uk | 07587 909356**



Somerset Film

An educational charity and film production company, Somerset Film have a reputation for inclusion, partnership working and creative innovation. Able to respond quickly and flexibly to new opportunities, creating work that has won awards nationally and internationally.

**www.somersetfilm.com | info@somersetfilm.com
01278 433187**



Spaeda Arts Education

SPAEDA, Somerset Partnership Art Education Agency, has a unique role in helping children and young people connect to the world around them, encouraging them to take a positive role in their communities and to be curious and adventurous. They believe that putting the arts and creativity at the heart of education supports the wellbeing of staff and pupils and provides space for rich learning experiences.

www.spaeda.org.uk | info@spaeda.org.uk | 01823 410160

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