

# Storyhouse and Dorin Park School Collaboration

## Description and Impact

In January 2022, Dorin Park School entered into a partnership with Storyhouse. This document describes why and how the collaboration came about and its impact on learners.

### Issues Facing Dorin Park School:

- Following COVID-19, some learners were struggling to transition to different spaces around school, and struggling to work with learners in other classes.
- The Formal pathway curriculum does not include Drama as a subject.
- A lack of historic theatre experiences for learners on the Pre-formal and Semi-explore pathways.
- A lack of performance space, resources, and storage space for sensory drama experiences in school.
- A recognition of the need to work with external professionals to offer learners different experiences.

### Statement of Actions:

- Dorin Park School Parent Teacher Association funded a Level 2 partnership between school and Storyhouse starting January 2022 for an academic year.
- A *Creative Learning Practitioner* has been visiting school half a day a week and has been working with learners to deliver bespoke workshops designed to support the pathway curriculums. Workshops are tailored to meet the abilities and needs of the learners in each pathway.
- A whole-school timetable was created such that each class has got a half-termly session with the *Creative Learning Practitioner*. This will continue across autumn term 2022.
- In June 2022, parents were invited into school to watch and participate in a selection of the workshops.

In addition, the partnership provides £1,000 of credit to spend on education at Storyhouse. So far, the credits have been spent on the Formal and Semi-formal pathways.

### Plans for Autumn Term 2022:

- The *Creative Learning Practitioner* will work with the remaining classes on the timetable.
- Pre-formal and Semi-explore pathway learners will access sensory theatre experiences at Storyhouse. Parents will be invited to watch, join in with a workshop.
- Semi-formal pathway learners will go on a Storyhouse theatre trip.

### Sessions – Description and Impact:

The work between Storyhouse and Dorin Park School is influenced by the late Dorothy Heathcote, who saw the relationship between children and ‘expert’ adults as collaborative, with young people taking ownership of discussions, ideas, and the way projects are led.

Each session involves most learners in discussion over topics, giving the learners ownership of their work.

The *Creative Learning Practitioner* uses warm up exercises and group activities to build the confidence to use drama techniques such as improvising, devising, movement, expression, body, and facial expressions.

Learners access the school hall to work in their sessions; some work collaboratively with their peers from other classes.

Warmup activities begin with something that moves the body and uses the voice in different ways to create a sense of freedom, and to break down any existing barriers learners have in performing in front of their peers.

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Some of the warmup games have links to improvisation and building the world around them. For example, one game called *Name It* encourages learners to call objects around them something different to usual. When a *chair* got called a *bed*, learners saw how they could interact with something in a different way and use their imagination. The games have links to improvisation as the learners begin to imagine themselves and their peers around them becoming different people in scenarios. The *Creative Learning Practitioner* works with the learners on techniques that create the world around them through storytelling, action, and speech.

Learners are encouraged to move and interact, developing their self-expression and building their confidence.

Learners who struggle with reading and writing responded more positively to the imaginative and multi-sensory learning offered by the sessions. In turn, these learners developed the following skills:

- Creativity
- Cooperation
- Leadership
- Negotiation

In each session, the *Creative Learning Practitioner* and school staff are part of the group workshops and plan and create together with the learners, building up strong trust. This has enabled the learners to build up the confidence to try out new activities and techniques.

For learners with behaviours that challenge or with problems interacting, the sessions provide them with an opportunity to let off energy within the boundaries of the workshop itself.

In addition, the workshops have supported the 'Zones of Regulation' framework; learners have been encouraged to use different facial expressions and actions to show a variety of emotions while they were in role.

Final performances have resulted in Shakespeare pieces, the creation of silent movie films for the learner's Artsmark award, participation in a creative adventure, and a storytelling session using imagination to bring the story to life in a large space.

### Impact Statements:

*A learner:* "I used to hate drama but then, when I visited Storyhouse on Friday, it was the best day of my life. I got to explore the theatre and see the lighting desk and where they control all the sound."

*A parent:* "It was lovely to see the young people working in creative ways."

*A school staff member:* "The negotiation and communication skills developed by some learners in the sessions have fed into other subjects in the classroom."

*A school staff member:* "It has been magical watching the learners use their imagination, pretending they were sprinkling dust from Tinkerbell over themselves."