

HAMPSHIRE YOUNG CREATIVES: ICKNIELD SPECIAL SCHOOL WITH DANCE UP



The People

Hampshire Young Creatives

Icknield Special School

The Lights

Dance Up (formerly Hampshire Dance)

The Project

Pupils from Icknield Special School aged 13-16 with severe learning difficulties were taken to The Lights to take part in an 11 week project of creative dance sessions. The sessions were 45 minutes in length and led by two artists. There were 8 boys and 6 girls, selected by the school to take part, and the sessions happened within school time. The aim was to improve participants' general wellbeing with a focus on confidence, and to refine their balance skills through engaging in a fun creative dance class.

A further 6 sessions were carried out for the group to undertake the Discover Arts Award. During these sessions, the group looked at dance, sculpture and painting. One session was dedicated to learning Bollywood and Street Dance. Two sessions were dedicated to creating a dance that used Bollywood Dance and sculpture as a stimulus. The last session was a sharing at the school. The six sessions at The Lights were focused on practical tasks and the participants worked on their learning journals at school with their teachers.

Successes

- The young people seemed to enjoy and really engage with all activities.
- They developed from initially only moving their arms to working creatively using their whole bodies.
- Using balance as a focus during the sessions enabled the young people to self-monitor their own development, as they understood the concept and could see their own improvement every week.
- The use of props and changing the theme every three weeks allowed pupils enough time to learn the material without getting bored with the ideas, keeping it fresh and of interest to them.

Challenges

- Cramped space – there was a large group of 14, with 4 teachers and 2 tutors and the space was limiting.
- Music equipment wasn't suitable – an old stereo was provided by the school that wasn't really loud enough for the sessions.
- At first, instrumental music was used but the group were more engaged with the use of pop music, so this was then used after the first few weeks.
- Co-delivering of the project was challenging at times.
- The group often arrived at different times so the length of the sessions varied.

One session was dedicated to learning Bollywood and Street Dance; another was based around creating a dance that used sculpture as a stimulus.



Suggested improvements for future projects

- Securing a bigger space for the activities.
- Being clearer on co-delivery roles at the start of the project.
- Use of more props. The artists would have liked to have used more props but due to travelling from London this wasn't practical this time around.

Recommendations for other organisations doing similar projects

- To have lots of help and support from teachers during the sessions – without this our project would not have been as successful at all.
- Have an achievable goal as a focus for the sessions. The participants knew they were

looking at improving their balance and this kept them engaged and gave them something to work towards. This would vary depending on the age and ability of the group.

How could the project partners best support this kind of work in the future?

- The health-focused training the artists took part in (Step Change) proved invaluable – if employing someone to work in this setting, make sure they are experienced in health work or have done similar training.
- It would also be beneficial if a member of staff from the host organisation took part in some of the training too.
- Specific practical health monitoring methods and theory in more detail.
- This school would benefit from an ongoing dance activity or club.

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Credits

Taken from: Hampshire Young Creatives Development Programme 2012/13 Report and Recommendations

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