



CASE STUDY

Elements: Supporting creativity in Early Years settings across Somerset

Setting: Blackbrook Primary School, Taunton

Type: Foundation Stage in primary school

Lead EYP name: Laura Archibald

Artist name: Peter Margerum

Artform: Recycled sculpture

Term date: Spring 2017

Average number of children and age: 8-12 children aged 4-5 years per group, (30 - 32 total per session)

Average number of adults and type: 1 Class Teacher, 2 Teaching Assistants

Research question: "How can having an artist at Blackbrook support staff to help children express their creativity?"

Activity:

The aim of the project was to support the school staff to help children express their creativity. The children were introduced to the materials, the tools and the securing materials they were able to use. Each week was a continuation and build up from the previous week.

Research findings:

Peter came to Blackbrook School to work with the EYFS children over a six week period. The children worked in groups of 8-12 children, with 1 adult from school and Peter. The children worked in the same groups each week and with the same adults. The activities took place within the classroom setting, which allowed the other children to see what the other groups were doing.

During the first week the children could assemble plastic scrap (each group had 2 colours) using wire, adhesive tape, elastic bands and blue tac.

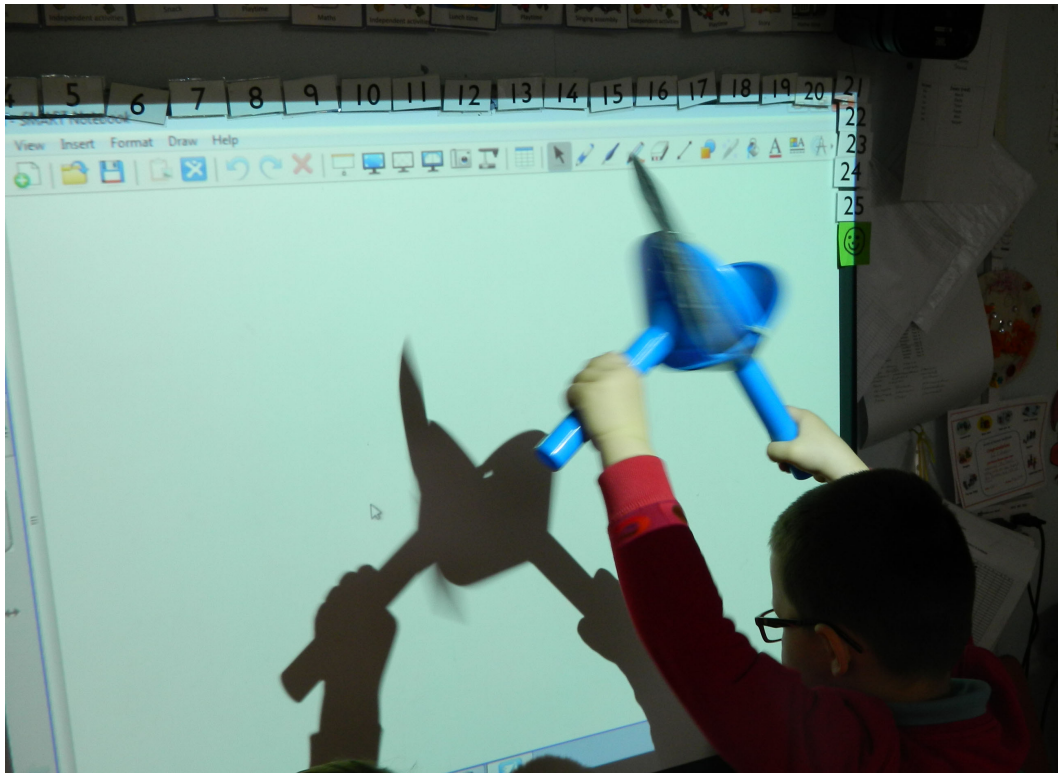
They created freestanding artworks, loosely assembled upright artworks, hand-held artworks. When they had finished they displayed collages of plastic scrap inside hoops on the floor.



During the second session the children were offered a different range of plastic materials and colours to choose from. The third session continued with this pattern, with an extension of coloured plastics plus black and white. They were also introduced to new joining materials, screws and nuts and bolts and a battery drill for making holes so that the artworks could be joined together and be more permanent.



Session four continued with making recycled plastic sculptures with the same set of five coloured plastic materials as previous weeks. The children were using nuts and bolts, cable ties adhesive tape, wire and elastic bands to join materials together. Each group had a slightly shorter session this week which allowed a thirty minute session at end of morning to display all the artworks as 'shadow images'.



The children had the opportunity to describe the 2D shadow images that they could see. Following on from session four the children decided they needed to add handles to their creations in order to hold them and see their shadows. So in session five coat-hanger handles were added by the children. In the final session the children worked in pairs and small groups to create a hanging mobile. Each child/group made something using plastic materials that would be straightforward for the school to collect in the future, and similar to the materials they had been experimenting with over the previous sessions. Their completed artworks were then added to their group's bike wheel mobile, and displayed outside the classroom.



The sessions have allowed the children to experiment with materials, tools and joining materials not previously available in the classroom. As each week went on the children became more confident with experimenting and realised there was no right or wrong answer and they could be free and flexible to produce something from their imagination. During the first three sessions the children expressed absolutely no concern about having to dismantle their artworks apart at the end of the session to enable the materials to be reused in further sessions

The staff became more familiar with the children's interests and how these could be encouraged further each week. Each session allowed the children to become more immersed and engaged, they were able to immediately get involved and put their thoughts and ideas into practice. The project allowed the adults to become more confident with recycled materials as well as joining materials not usually available in the classroom. It showed how the children were keen to experiment and not necessarily produce a finished piece, this will definitely lend itself to new projects within the classroom. The project encouraged open-ended ideas and the children to be freer and more independent. The sessions have encouraged the adults to be less prescriptive about the resources offered to the children in the future.



Quotes:

"The project has definitely caused a change to our mindset and has encouraged us to let the children be freer and have wider opportunities" - Class teacher.

"It's a wind teller, and it tells you about the wind and it moves in the wind" - Ben

"We've made a jet launcher it jets off into the sky" - Finlay and Tyler

Conclusion:

Overall the project was a huge success. It has provided us with a greater understanding of the children and their interests. Peter encouraged a new way of thinking about art, the materials being used and the final products. The staff developed a better awareness of the children and the things that appealed to them. Allowing the children to be more independent and less set on making a particular object/item helped the staff to ask better questions and therefore getting a better understanding of the children's individual creativity.