

Using art objects in special educational needs settings: a responsive evaluation of the Held in Hand project

Lorraine Foreman-Peck and Kate Travers

March 2012



Leicestershire
County Council



Open
Museum

Preface

The Held in the Hand Artworks Collection is made up of sets of unique objects designed to increase access to contemporary art for adults and children regardless of physical and learning disabilities. This report explores the potential of developing arts based provision in special needs settings using these unique sculptures and Touch Table resources. The Held in the Hand collection emerged from the work of Lisa Webb, Artworks Officer at Leicestershire County Council who developed the idea for the collection and commissioned the objects.

Accessing information and research on the use of specially commissioned artworks in special needs settings has proved to be challenging. Special Educational Needs provision is an area that Leicestershire Heritage and Arts Service has been developing with an aim to meet need and share best practice. An apparent gap in information relating to this area of work led the Heritage and Arts Service to initiate a project that could critically explore best practice and investigate how these objects could enhance levels of engagement, attainment and voice in pupils with profound, multiple and moderate learning disabilities.

The Henley review on Cultural Education in England (2012) has made recommendations for cultural provision in schools to be quality assessed and for cultural services to demonstrate an understanding of the needs of education providers. This report shows how partnership working that respects and considers the needs of pupils, education staff and artists can lead to exemplary learning approaches that demonstrates a quality learning experience and offers gains in professional development. Significantly the findings of our work shows how these unique objects and methods of engagement can enhance pupils' concentration, communication and engagement in learning within the creative curriculum in special needs settings.

Brian Kennedy
Head of Learning
Heritage and Arts
Leicestershire County Council
March 2012



CONTENTS

Introduction	3
Project Structure, Findings and Recommendations	5
Appendices	
i Held in the Hand Objects	20
ii Ethical Statement	23
iii Teacher and Artist Logs	24
iv Structured Observation Schedules	28



Introduction

Leicestershire County Council (LCC) Heritage and Arts Service and Library Education Support Service commissioned a Held in Hand research and development project to investigate how Artworks loan resources, 'Held in the Hand' and 'Touch Table' collections can be used to enrich the curriculum and enhance learning engagement and attainment for special schools.

The LCC Artworks collection consists of some 800 artefacts. The Held in the Hand Collection consists of 63 objects and was begun in 2009. Artists were commissioned to create hand sized sculptural artworks that could be experienced through tactile multisensory engagement (for examples see appendix i). Objects were been designed to intrigue pupils and to provide a stimulus for workshops and lessons.

The research and development project's purpose was to provide research evidenced advice for future service users. The following objectives were chosen for their usefulness for teachers and artists working in special educational needs schools.

- To explore the best way of working with artists, teachers and pupils in developing and delivering workshops for pupils with special educational needs
- To illustrate the way in which Held in Hand workshops can contribute to pupil attainment in the creative curriculum
- To explore the potential of Held in Hand workshops to encourage pupil voice for special educational needs pupils

Designed to be exploratory and descriptive, the main project objective was to seek insights that would be of use to practitioners and to document the especial learning affordances of these objects, if any.





Approach

Held in Hand workshops were held in four special educational needs schools with different profiles. Researchers and artists met with teachers on at least four occasions. The first was a sharing of ideas and information meeting. The following three to four sessions consisted of the delivery of the workshop by artist and teacher (with teaching assistants) working in partnership. At the end of the teaching sessions researchers aimed to share with teachers and artists the data they had collected, with a view to revising if necessary future plans. The approach was thus democratic responsive evaluation. All participants were invited to contribute their ideas to the research, development of workshops, and to collect data.

The research approach was also intended to be iterative. Lessons learnt from research in one school were adopted or suggested in the next. Areas requiring further investigation were also noted. This applied as much to the research process as to the delivery of the workshops as we expected to learn from possible mistakes or misapprehensions. The exploratory nature of the research and the expectation that we would be learning from what went wrong as well as what went right was explained to all participants. The element of risk that might have been perceived by the research design was mitigated by the assurances of participant anonymity in any reporting. Pseudonyms have therefore been used to protect participants identity. The project adhered to the ethical guidelines recommended by the British Education Researchers Association (2011) (see appendix ii) and these were explained in the planning meeting. The voluntary nature of the research was emphasised and the need for parental/carer permission.

Methods Used

Researchers used a variety of data collection methods. In the planning meetings and after session meetings notes were kept and checked for accuracy with one another and the teachers. Teachers and artists were asked to keep logs and fill out an end of project questionnaire (see appendix iii). During sessions researchers carried out naturalistic observation and time limited structured observations concentrating on two pupils in each group. Pupils were either selected randomly or by the teacher. The schedules for structured observations were derived either from the P scales if the pupils were aged over 5 years of age, or from a combination of P scales and Early Years curriculum descriptors, if the pupils were under 5 years of age or if over 5, had a developmental age of less than 5 years old (see appendix iv).

The overriding consideration for choosing a particular descriptor was whether it could be considered indicative or constitutive of an achieved or emerging pupil voice. In the first school (A) the pupils who are aged 12-14 years were working at P level 4-8. In the second school (B) pupils are 10-11 years old and working at P level 4-8. In school C the pupils are 3-5 years old and are therefore following the Early Years curriculum. In school D the pupils are 14 years have complex learning needs and are working at P levels 1-3. In all four schools the teachers have adopted



more differentiated descriptors for assessment purposes. These were made available to the researchers in school B, C and D and were taken into account when constructing the structured observation schedule. It is important to emphasise that what counts as 'voice' may be different for different ages and ability levels, and for pupils without speech included gestures.

Voice

Voice is a key concept in the research and it is therefore important to be clear about how the researchers interpreted it. By pupils' voice we meant pupils expressing opinions, preferences, and making choices. The aim of encouraging student voice is closely tied to the idea of self advocacy, citizenship education, and independence in learning. An assumption of the research which was to be tested, was that the art workshops would enable pupils to express their 'voice'.

A conceptual difficulty is that the descriptors especially when broken down into smaller 'steps' are behavioural. Behaviour alone is ambiguous. For example a hand clap may express joy or distress, or it may be a behaviour with no meaning intent. A blink could be an expression of choice or a reflex action. 'Voice' is quintessentially an intentional concept. Thus the researchers had to interpret behaviours as possible expressions of pupil intentions. For the upper P Levels (4-8) where pupils can speak this is not a problem. For pupils at these levels who cannot speak, and for those aged 14-16 years working below level 4 the problems of detecting voice are more challenging. Similarly detecting voice for children aged 3-5, is difficult. The researchers therefore had to interpret the context, and check judgements with teachers about whether the pupils had expressed their voices. The reliability of judgements was strengthened by having two researchers comparing their judgements based on the detailed collection of observational data.

Baselines

For the structured observations two pupils were observed in each session using one of two schedules thought appropriate for either the learning need or the age of the pupils (see appendix iv)

Pupils were observed for sample periods of time, usually between 15 and 30 minutes. Their utterances and gestures were recorded, as was a description of what was happening in the classroom at the time. In this way it was possible to provide linguistic profiles for the pupils over three sessions. Using this method it was feasible to show for each pupil how many utterance/gestures were made and which descriptor they fitted. The first session could be seen as a baseline against which 'gains' in the expression of voice could be measured. However this approach is questionable in certain respects. Firstly it assumes that the snapshot we have in the first session is an accurate representation of capacity. Even with pupil teacher assessments and Individual Learning Plans, the descriptors indicative of 'voice' as we have operationally defined it, may be absent even though the pupil has capacity. Secondly it assumes that any increase or decrease in 'voice' is due to the Held in Hand workshop. This is a questionable assumption since decreases may be attributable to ill health, increases to events outside the classroom.

We cannot, in a small project of this design, answer the question whether any 'gains' witnessed were due in a statistically significant sense, to the project and would not have happened anyway. What we can do is build an impartial case which presents what happened, what was observed, and whether on the basis of evidence there is a prima facie case for hypothesising that the Held in Hand findings were due to the Held in Hand workshops.

The Held in Hand Project Evaluation and Workshop Delivery

The evaluation of the Held in Hand Workshops was organised around three questions

1. What are the best ways of working with artists, teachers and pupils in developing and delivering workshops for pupils with SEN?
2. In what ways can the Held in Hand Workshops contribute to pupil attainment in the creative curriculum?
3. Do the Held in Hand workshops have the potential to develop pupil voice for pupils with SEN?



The research and evaluation was designed to be exploratory and to carry over inquiry points or lessons from one case study site to the next. Prior to the start of this project the Held in the Hand objects and Touch Table objects had only been used in a few special needs settings with older children or adults in small groups. Therefore some of the findings and recommendations arising in this report are due to the exploratory nature of the project, including testing the robustness of the objects with young children, forming effective research approaches with artists and teachers, and identifying elements of the objects that successfully engaged pupils.

Initially there were some apprehensions expressed by teachers in education settings about handling these unfamiliar objects. There was also excitement at being given permission to handle original artworks, to contribute to knowledge development and work creatively and collaboratively with arts professionals. The artists and teachers had not worked together prior to the start of this project and they needed to build working relationships within a short timescale of three to four weeks.

Different approaches were developed by artists to engage pupils and teachers with the objects and activities. In Case Study A objects were hidden for pupils to discover. Pupils were then invited to make up a story about their chosen object and create artwork inspired by that object. In Case Study B pupils encountered the objects in a soft space and were encouraged to explore and develop their creativity using drawing, collage and clay materials. In Case Study C the objects were introduced using an adapted lesson structure and the artist worked with pupils to develop their curiosities and respond to their interests to encourage independent engagement. Case Study D saw the artist focus on sensory exploration of the objects and texture. Pupils used their hands and feet to explore the objects and Touch Tables and to create their own artwork using a type of modelling clay.

The following sections summarise the findings and recommendations in response to the three key questions on working practices, pupil attainment and pupil voice.

Section One

What are the best ways of working with artists, teachers and pupils in developing and delivering workshop for pupils with SEN?

The Held in the Hand objects and Touch Tables were inspirational for creative teaching and learning opportunities. Artists welcomed opportunities to work together with researchers and teachers, to plan ideas, to reflect on sessions and adapt their workshops in light of pupils' responses, communications and actions. Teachers benefited from working with artists to interpret objects they had not previously encountered and experience different approaches to facilitating learning opportunities. Pupils were given rare opportunities and freedom to explore artworks through tactile engagement acting on their own interests and observations to explore and try out ideas. The ambiguous interpretations of objects supported divergent creative ways of working. A team approach was required between artists, teachers and researchers to tailor these learning experiences to make relevant the sessions to all involved.



At initial planning meetings expectations and ethics were discussed; the artist needed to be sympathetic to the needs of pupils and school protocols, the teacher needed to be sympathetic to constructing a creative environment that supported the artist in communicating and delivering activities with pupils. It became clear that where there was a shared understanding of 'creativity' there was an openness to exploring new ways of working. The project was designed to benefit schools by gathering evidence of pupil engagement, enhancing data captured by teachers and seeking to support achievement by linking to pupils' individual education plans.

A need to engage with artist voice as well as teacher and pupil voice became increasingly evident as the project developed. Artists selected for this project were experienced in working in educational environments and there were occasions when their adaptability, creativity, communication skills and competence were greatly relied on to deliver their activities following minimal discussion planning time with teaching and teaching assistant staff. However all the artists involved commented on how they appreciated working as a team to use their skills and experience, to problem solve, contribute to data collection and reflect on pupils' learning and how they could encourage individual creative development.

Ways of Working Findings

- The research approach gave voice to teachers and artists to plan in a way that was responsive to observations of pupil engagement, interests and learning needs
- A developmental approach to the project resulted in surprising engagement from some pupils
- Working with pupils' individual learning plans strengthened the artists understanding of pupils' current levels of communication and achievements
- Artists welcomed the opportunity to discuss and describe their observations, to implement their creative ideas in response to pupils' ideas
- Objects offered new and rare experiences for all pupils and educators to engage in the exploration of contemporary artworks
- Teachers and artists gained in terms of professional development and methods of engagement

The next section reflects on lessons learned and offers recommendations for ways of working with artists, teachers and pupils in the areas of communications, objects handling and recording information.

Best Ways of Working Recommendations

Communications

From the first case study, the management of communication between all parties was foregrounded as needing more careful consideration. We learnt that working in SEN settings can present unforeseen challenges for artists and that reassurance is needed for visiting professionals such as artists that they were working in a way that is accessible and engaging for the pupils. Furthermore we learnt that the respective roles of the teacher and the artist need to be made explicit. In some case study sites there was anxiety over visual documentation and the procedures for obtaining parental or carer permission. Assumptions that teachers would have access to e-mails or that information would be passed on had to be revised.

We learnt that the purpose of meetings at each stage needed to be thought through and that the management of communication had to fit in with the realities of working in a school.

From a consideration of the research in all four sites it became apparent that several key stages in communication need to be managed if the best outcomes for the project were to be realised. The issues and recommendations were discussed with all participants at the end of the project in a feedback day.

Communication was more successful where the artist had some pre-delivery observation time, to observe the teacher teaching the class that they would be working with. This allowed the teacher and artist time to think about teaching strategies, pupil communication needs and approaches to develop pupil engagement at an appropriate level.



Best Ways of Working: Communication Recommendations

Communication Process	Purpose	Recommendation
Pre-delivery meeting with Head or Senior teacher undertaken by project leader	To explain the project /gain access to teacher and classroom/set up classroom observation and planning meeting with teacher(s).	Supplement with an information pack provide standard permission/information templates/letters for parents or carers Provide a notice or poster for the staffroom or reception area to inform all staff in the school of the project, its aims and contact details.
Observation of classroom teacher teaching the target class and planning stage	To observe the pupils to gauge their capacities/to check out possible risks/for the artist to sketch out some ideas/for tasks to be shared between teacher and artist depending on what learning outcomes they envisage/ for any requirements the school has to be communicated e.g working within established routines, risk assessments, health and safety issues/issues particular to individual pupils e.g tendency to swallow small objects, throw them, or to react badly if addressed by name.	The workshops are preceded by observation and joint planning
Between session communications	For the artist to send confirmed session delivery plans to the teacher so that they can make arrangements if necessary. E-mail proved unreliable in some case study sites, messages were not received.	The artist and teacher should make explicit the mode, form and purpose of communications between sessions
End of session communications	To review the workshop and to plan for the next, if appropriate/ to feedback observations on the pupils work and attainment if required.	Time should be built into the workshops for the artist and the teacher to reflect and review

Object handling

A further practical issue arose in the first case study when a pupil set out to test his strength by deliberately applying force to one of the objects. In some cases the objects were not robust enough for handling by the pupils even when they were being relatively careful, and were closely monitored by the staff. However the objects had not been designed with this type of interaction in mind and there was an expectation that new objects would need to be developed for specific groups (e.g. young children).

In other cases the heavy objects presented a risk to others if thrown. However the staff in one school commented that the small heavy objects were interesting for their pupils as they did not normally handle anything heavy. All case study sites appreciated the fact that the objects would not be normally found in the pupils' everyday environment and were stimulating from that point of view. The fact that the objects were in some sense precious artefacts and needed careful handling could not be communicated to the pupils, in the majority of cases because of their SLDs, and /or young age.

'The individual objects were useful, but precious and needed to be used very carefully. However [handling precious objects] is not always something to be avoided, it's nice to have something precious to hold.'
Teacher comment

Object Handling Recommendations

The first recommendation is that Held in the Hand art objects are evaluated for their robustness and potential for causing accidental injury by the class teacher, this could be part of the observation and planning meeting (stage 2). Heavy objects or objects that may be considered to be a higher risk category may be suitable for certain pupils in carefully risk assessed circumstances.

By allowing pupils to hold objects the appropriate behaviours required may take some time to learn for pupils in special needs settings. A protocol for handling should be advised to the schools, such as an object should be handled with care, dropping and throwing to be avoided unless the object is designed and is safe to be thrown. Handling should take place under the close supervision of the teacher or TAs, (as one would when showing a child how to handle a tool). These issues did not arise with the Touch Tables as they were fixed, they were made of robust materials and did not have fragile moving parts or pointed ceramic/metal edges.

Free engagement within safe parameters is important to maximise learning opportunities and could be allowed if objects are suitably designed. A handling protocol could be contained in the supplementary information pack for schools. Deeper consideration could also be given to identify suitable materials that can withstand the handling needs of the pupils. The range of boxes on offer could include a box of softer objects for classes where pupils are volatile or tend to throw and drop objects.

A further recommendation is that the artist and teachers be apprised of the procedures if an accident happens with an object and what the consequences could be.



Recording

All case study sites were reluctant to use film or photographs where the identity of individual pupils was made apparent. This was thought to be a problem where the images could be used outside the school premises. The problem of providing a visual record was solved in the first site by the expedient of focusing the camera on hands/feet and objects only. In two schools however the teachers wished to have photographs of pupils which identified them and which could be used for their records of progress (e.g. Learning Journey Folders) . The artists agreed to download their photographs onto the school computer for the school to use. Should participants wish to use a photograph where pupil identity is apparent, it was suggested that the parents or careers be given a copy and asked for permission for it to be reproduced.



Summary of Recommendations: Communication, Object Handling, Recording

- Pre-delivery meeting with Head or Senior teacher should be supplemented with an information pack, contact details, staffroom notice, and letter templates.
- The workshops should be preceded by the artist observing the teacher teaching the class that is to be using the objects and should engage in planning and role definition with the teacher
- The artist and teacher should make explicit the mode, form and purpose of communications between sessions
- Time should be built into the workshops for the artist and the teacher to reflect and review
- Objects need to be made of suitable materials for younger pupils and pupils with more complex needs
- Develop a box of softer materials for pupils with more complex behavioural and physical needs
- Provide a foam board or soft board for pupils to place the object on
- A handling protocol should be devised for schools and artists alongside an evaluation process for each object's suitability for classes and individuals
- Artists and teachers should agree what can be filmed or photographed , who has access to the record and how and where they can be used

Section 2

In what ways can the Held in Hand Workshops contribute to pupil attainment in the creative curriculum?

In the four case studies mentioned, artists delivered workshops to pupils ranging from 3-16 years, who had a range of physical difficulties, impairments, and learning difficulties. Some pupils have medical conditions. The case studies capture the complexity of the challenge faced by the artists and the kind of interaction that was possible with pupils who, for the most part, are linguistically delayed or have no speech.

The Held in Hand workshops demonstrated pupils' engagement with new stimuli (the objects), sensory exploration of texture, sound and colour. There were many instances of pupils showing intense concentration and enjoyment as they explored the object either freely or with the help of staff. The objects afforded opportunities for the staff to talk about the object's properties, using artistic vocabulary.

Objects also functioned as a stimulus for exploring new materials, such as model magic and mod roc, or familiar materials, such as cling film, in new ways. In one site a visually impaired student used the computer to design her object. There was an opportunity for pupils to handle new tools such as hammers and to engage in movements which presented personal challenges given their disabilities, such as cutting, sticking, squeezing, pressing and patting.

Many pupils explored the visual and textural properties of the objects. They often investigated them through movement to communicate their thoughts and ideas, for example, moving the object from one hand to the other, rolling, passing, bouncing the object in their hands to feel the weight, sliding the object over their face and holding it close to their body. Holding the objects encouraged pupils to view them from different perspectives and use tools such as torches to learn more about them.

The objects appeared to encourage some problem solving, for example some pupils were inquisitive about the sounds that were inside some of the objects. Typically if they had heard a sound in one they tested others for sound and to see if they could feel sound vibrations. Pupils with moderate learning needs speculated about how the sounds were created and what may be inside the object.

Pupils with moderate learning needs made the connection between the objects and artistic practice, and seemed to understand them as artworks and the terms 'artist' and 'sculpture'. They understood that the objects needed to be treated with care. The pupils with autism traits and more complex learning needs did not appear to make these connections.

There is evidence that some pupils appeared to be inspired by the observations they made of the objects, for example, in school C they selected clay shapes that replicated the shapes of their favourite objects and worked to create their own textured surfaces. In school A they made collective decisions about the development

'We felt it went really well..the children interacted better than expected with the artefacts'



of the objects inspired by the shapes and the holes in the objects and produced individual works that reflected the visual and tactile properties.

Approaches to imaginative play and imaginative representation were varied. In school B pupils were asked to create visual representations of sound. Typically they drew a visual representation of the instrument rather than a sound interpretation. There were a few examples of imaginative play for example in school

C the MAP object became a rocket and this was carried through into the pupil's clay work. It is important to note that the majority of the pupils involved in the project had limited communication, social interaction skills and very few of them demonstrated imaginary play. However where these skills were demonstrated they were noted as remarkable achievements that were attributed to both working with the unique Held in the Hand/Touch Table objects and the facilitation of learning experiences.

'We will allow pupils to explore rather than expect an end product' Teacher comment

Summary of Findings Pupil Attainment and Object Engagement

- Sustained moments of concentration more notably from pupils with more complex needs and attention difficulties
- Most children showed curiosity and a few showed awe and wonder in response to the objects
- Most pupils worked creatively to explore the objects through physical movement with assistance
- A small number of pupils demonstrated imaginative play when interacting with the objects and creating their own work
- Some pupils echoed patterns seen in the objects in their own work
- Most pupils benefited from having creative autonomy to select materials, create their own mark making (where possible) and design rather than typically working to a set outcome
- Most pupils worked coactively, some worked more independently not needing as many prompts, making choices, using observational motor and communication skills
- The most popular aspects of the objects appeared to be those with sounds, with holes that you can look into or look through, objects you can stack, roll, spin, objects you can put things into
- Some pupils practised their social skills through creative activity
- The unfamiliarity and unusual appearance of the objects appeared to encourage some pupils to engage in ways that were not typically seen when they were working with more familiar objects
- The multiple interpretations that could be made by exploring the objects allowed educators, support staff and pupils freedom to interpret and communicate their thoughts

The following recommendations have been identified for future development and delivery:

Recommendations for Touch Tables and Held in the Hand:

- Continue to offer schools the opportunities to work with artists/creative professionals to engage with the objects
- Link to other areas of the curriculum, produce resources to support, music, geography, science, history, PSHE
- Explore storytelling, link with the Library education service create story packs (including poetry) linked to the objects
- Continue to develop objects that are more robust, to build teachers and pupil confidence in handling the objects
- Create a 'starter box' or box of objects made of soft materials for pupils to learn to handle objects and link to the arts and communication areas of the curriculum.
- Continue to develop objects that encourage problem solving, curiosity, exploration, pupils interacted inquisitively with objects that had things inside, holes and sounds.
- Encourage pupils to use magnifying glasses, torches to develop observational, problem solving and questioning skills
- The What's in the Box approach was a useful structure for introducing the objects, encouraging careful handling and could be easily adapted

Section 3

Do the Held in Hand workshops have the potential to develop pupil voice for pupils with SEN?

The research looked in detail at the way in which pupils' voices were facilitated by the workshops. Pupil voice was defined as 'showing preferences, like and dislikes, making choices, expressing opinions and ideas'.

Workshops afforded the pupils many opportunities to make choices and to express preferences. In the school where pupils were very young or PMLD the choice range was controlled either by the teacher or the artist (see case study C and D). Pupils indicated preferences, in most cases by gesture rather than words. Pupils in schools A and B were offered a less controlled range of choices in terms of the objects they wished to explore and the materials they wished to use for making.

Pupils expressed their ideas non – verbally in terms of the objects they made. These varied from making a joint sculpture (school A), to making individual music boxes or miniature landscapes (school B), to making outdoor artefacts such as a cling film trail and metal sculpture (school C) to a joint textural mural and stained 'glass' window.

'I feel my class had voice in terms of choice, artistic expression and the occasional eureka moment when pupils came out with unexpected comments or answers to questions' Teacher comment

In each class two pupils were observed more closely to try to determine whether the workshops afforded opportunities for linguistic development that are perhaps less likely to occur in more formal classroom interactions. The following is a brief selective summary. Details are given in the case studies.

In school A, it was possible to see the development or manifestation of a linguistic repertoire one of the pupils observed. Sofia, who is visually impaired, moved from one word utterances in response to questions in the first session to a fully formed question by the third session. Al, the second pupil observed has limited speech and can often only vocalise. Nevertheless he showed great enthusiasm and effort in trying to vocalise in the first session, in the second he was possibly unwell and withdrawn, but in the third had regained his motivation to try again and joined in. Both pupils showed interest and engagement and responded well to working informally alongside the artist.

In school B two 10 year old pupils on the autistic disorder spectrum were observed. Kai has a large range of utterances, many of which are echolalia. He typically responds to questions from adults with one word answers. Responses to questions about what he is making are sometimes imaginative and surprising but the replies do not always have a clear meaning and are one word replies. However in the second session he was using sentences beginning with 'I want...' Such sentences had been practised with the teacher earlier and Kai was applying his learning. Aisha gave one word answers to questions from adults but sometimes she chooses not to respond. She often made quiet sounds whilst working. There were occasions when she began to formulate a question. She almost began to communicate with another pupil. Both pupils showed sustained concentration and enjoyment.

In School C two pupils were observed in detail. Max a 3 year old with ADHD and on the autistic spectrum, obeyed instructions, repeated words spoken by other people and spoke to himself whilst working. He appeared to ask himself questions about his own play. In the third session, that took place outside Max made an independent choice of activity, engaged with another child and asked the teacher for help. Jake, also 3 years old with ADHD and autism traits attended two out of the three sessions and showed increased concentration, awe and wonder saying 'wow' in response to the MAP object. Jake followed instructions, initiated communication with adults, showed others his work and used one or two words at a time to describe what he was doing, what he could see and how he was feeling. Over two sessions Jake showed sustained interest in creating his own work, exploring circular shapes and initiating communication with adults to show them his work.

In the last school (D) two 16 year old pupils were observed. Sarah and Laura were pupils with PMLD and no speech. In the first session they were both enabled by both the teacher and teaching assistants to make choices, explore the pictures, objects and model magic using in most cases limited movement. The model magic was explored using hands and feet. The interaction was very lively and Sarah and Laura showed concentration and enjoyment. In the second session both pupils demonstrated progression, Laura for example, patted the mural that the artist had composed out of modelling material in the previous session. This was a reference to her earlier achievement and the teacher was very pleased and commented that she has not done this before.

Findings

- Evidence was seen of some pupils developing their linguistic repertoire
- Evidence was seen of some pupils asking questions
- Pupils made choices occasionally through verbal but mainly through non verbal gestures
- Pupils had some control over when and how they engaged with the objects and workshops
- Pupils were observed by teachers as responding well to a more responsive session structure, providing pupils with some autonomy over the pace that they learn, their choice of objects, materials, tools and design
- Pupils responded well to the freedom they were given to work on their individual interests, follow their own creative path

Recommendations

- Choice and preference can continue to be easily explored through the Held In The Hand and Touch Table resources
- Pupils need to be given time to explore the objects at their own pace
- Sessions could be structured to support the development of pupil's own learning paths and encourage independence e.g. by selecting their tools and materials
- Pupils' voice to be encouraged through open ended tasks to develop pupils' ideas, interests and interaction with objects
- The Touch Tables as a fixed larger object make it easier for some pupils with more complex physical disabilities to explore textures, temperature and sound

Conclusion

It seems reasonable to **hypothesise** on the basis of observations that the Held in Hand workshops made a wider range of speech and gestures possible and that the crucial elements were:

- Informal working /working alongside
- Freedom of movement
- Less constrained choices, freedom to choose
- Novelty and attractiveness of objects, attractiveness of materials, new tools
- An opportunity provided for pupils to apply new words/gestures and sentence structures previously taught
- Provided an opportunity for dialogue between pupils (in a few cases)
- Provided opportunities to engage and sustain pupils' concentration to support their learning
- Initiated curiosity in pupils, motivating them to explore the objects, to investigate where a sound was coming from and to look inside objects
- Sensory exploration of the objects was important to enable all pupils to engage regardless of their physical, emotional and intellectual challenges

The concept and ideas behind the Held in the Hand objects and the Touch Tables have intrigued pupils and teachers who have shown immense enjoyment and curiosity. The project has also shown some very surprising positive results including an increase in pupils concentration, interaction and some evidence of wonder. These skills and levels of communication are rarely or only occasionally seen when working with these groups of pupils. During the project teachers, teaching assistants and artists have been both enthralled and motivated by the level of pupil engagement, creativity and communication.

'The researchers and the artist took on board the nature of our children and they adapted to make activities safe and accessible'
Teacher comment

'I enjoyed working with the team and it was nice to have time to explore something different.'
Teacher comment

Appendix i
Held in the Hand Objects
Turquoise Box
Case Study A and D



The Treasure Bag showing the pots and coins that are found inside

The Case or the Conker



Sound Stones



The Turquoise Held in the Hand Box

Orange Box

Case Study B



Chain Mail Cushion



Pod



Texture



Fallen Star



Orange Held in the Hand Box

Green Box

Case Study D



Magic Fruit



Belly Button



Musical Rainbow Cone



Heirloom



Raincloud



Net of Caught Glass

Appendix ii

Ethical Statement

The researchers will be guided by the British Educational Research Guidelines (BERA 2004), and will re-visit the Ethical Statement periodically. At this point in time, no risks to the welfare, or privacy of any participant (researchers, students, teachers, teaching assistants, artists and administrative staff) are anticipated.

The BERA Guidelines recommend that all participants are fully informed of the nature and purpose of the research, the expected outcomes and the reason why their participation is required. This will be achieved either orally or in written form (or both). An information sheet will be provided for participants, where appropriate, outlining the research and giving contact details.

Participation in the research is voluntary and participants have the right to decline to take part, or to withdraw at any stage. Students will be recruited on a voluntary basis. Parents or carers of those students who are affected by the research will be informed that the Held in Hand workshop is being evaluated and they will be given the opportunity to decline to let their children take part in research activities. They will be asked to return an opt out form. Teachers, teaching assistants, artists and administrative staff 's participation will also be voluntary.

Participants' identity will be protected. Individuals will not be identified in any report, unless it is impossible not to do so. In the latter case their permission will be sought before publication of any report or document.

All information from individual participants or about individual participants will be treated confidentially.

All data collected as part of the research will be held securely, as required by the Data Protection Act (1998). Data will be anonymised, by number or pseudonym (where possible) and access to the data will be restricted to the researchers and the members of the steering group for research purposes only.

BERA : Ethical Guidelines for Educational Research (2011) <http://www.bera.ac.uk> PDF

Appendix iii

Logs and Questionnaires

Held in Hand Artists Reflective Log

Your name

The school you were working in

The class name / teacher name

The reflective log is an opportunity to write freely about the Held in Hand sessions. We would like you to be able to share this with us and others. It would be helpful to us if you could date your entries.

We suggest that shortly after each session you make a note of your impressions about how things went. (Please identify the session) Was the session a success? If so why? In your opinion did the session allow you to realise your learning intentions in terms of art? Did you think the sessions gave the pupils adequate opportunities to make decisions, express preferences and practice and develop communication skills ? Did particular pupils show evidence of development in terms of communicative skills?

Did you personally learn anything new in terms of ideas or skills that you might apply in future ? What did you think of the objects? What did you see your role in the sessions as being ? Would you have welcomed a different kind of involvement with the teachers?

Please feel free to write on anything about the Held in Hand project that is important to you.

Held in Hand Project Teachers and TAs Reflective Log

Name

School

Date

The reflective log is an opportunity to write freely about the Held in Hand sessions. We would like you to be able to share this with us and others.

We suggest that shortly after each session you make a note of your impressions about how things went. (Please identify the session) Was the session a success? If so why? Were the sessions sufficiently well structured to enable pupils to practice and develop communication skills? Did particular pupils show evidence of development in terms of communicative skills? Did they show development in any other area of the curriculum? What do you see as the main benefits of the Held in Hand project?

Did you personally learn anything new ideas or skills that you might apply in future? What did you think of the objects? What was your role in the sessions? Would you have welcomed a different kind of involvement?

Please feel free to write on anything you think it that it would be useful to know about the project or on anything that is important to you.

Held in Hand Project Questionnaire for Teachers

Your name

Name of school:

Name of class/class teacher:

Date:

Name of the artist you were working with:

This questionnaire will be e-mailed to you at the end of the project.

- 1 .What did you see as the purpose of the sessions, for you, the pupils and the artist?

2. In what ways did you or will you adapt your practice in the light of input from the artist and the researchers?

3. Were the objects satisfactory for your needs and for the pupils? (please state which objects were used).

4. Did you feel that the pupil voice was sufficiently elicited?

5. Was there evidence of learning occurring in other areas of the curriculum?

5. Did anything surprise you about the pupils during these sessions?

6. Were you happy about the way the project was set up? Please expand.

7. Please let us know anything that you think we ought to know about this project

Held in Hand Project Questionnaire for Artists

Your name :

Name of school you have been working in:

Name of the class or class teacher:

Today's date:

1 . How would you define your artistic practice within an educational context? What were your expectations of the project before you started and were they fulfilled?

2. In what ways did you (if you did) adapt or change your practice (before and during the sessions) to accommodate pupils needs as expressed in the P scales? Please give some examples.

3. Were the objects satisfactory for your needs and for the pupils? (please state which objects you used)

4. How did you envisage facilitating pupils' voice? Did you feel that the pupil voice was sufficiently elicited?

5. Did anything surprise you about the work or responses from the pupils in the sessions?

6. Were you happy with your sessions and the way the project was set up? Please expand.

7. Please let us know anything that you think we ought to know about this project!

Structured Observation P scales and Early Years

Pupil

Date/ Time/ Place/ Artist

Descriptors

1. Indicates likes/dislikes verbally or through gestures (P3ii)
2. Shows others an object or person (Comm. 16-20 months)
3. Returns to activity of own choice when observing a peer ((Comm. 16-20 months)
4. Joins in familiar poems or songs (22-36 months creative development)
5. Moves body to music (16-26 months creative development)
6. Accepts and engages in coactive exploration (P2i)
7. Other

Time	Descriptor nos.	notes

About the Artists



Ellie Foreman-Peck

Ellie Foreman-Peck qualified as an Illustrator in 2008 and has since worked for numerous papers and magazines including the Daily Telegraph and GQ magazine. She has written and illustrated children's books and is currently designing a book cover illustration for Random House Publishers. She also runs bespoke workshops for schools, hospitals, colleges and universities. To view a sample of her work visit www.elliefp.co.uk

Ellie Reynish

Ellie Reynish is an Artist Educator who has worked in various educational fields for the past eight years, developing creative, inspiring and imaginative project work with schools, families and community groups. Specialising in working within Early Years education she helps to develop pedagogical and reflective thinking around children's learning processes. To find out more about her work visit www.elliereynish.wordpress.com



Claire Witcomb

Claire Witcomb studied sculpture and works across arts disciplines to design, build, make and create. She is a collaborator working with children, young people and adults in many guises. Her recent work includes designing public artwork and building natural play spaces for children, informed by participative and reflective approaches. She has extensive experience of working in arts, community and educational settings to nurture creativity and imagination. She has worked on creative projects in the UK and China. Email: one.clw@virgin.net

Andrew Wynne

Andrew Wynne is a visual artist working in Batik and Mosaic. He has vast experience of working with education and community organisations and his artworks have been shortlisted twice for the 'Art In Nature' exhibition hosted by The Artist Magazine. He works on commissions for education, heritage and cultural organisations, including the National Trust. Andrew is an experienced tutor, designing and delivering workshops for schools, hospitals, colleges and business clients. For further information visit: www.andrewwynne.co.uk



About the Authors

Dr Lorraine Foreman-Peck

Lorraine Foreman-Peck is currently a Research Fellow at Oxford University. After teaching English in inner city secondary schools, she developed a career in practice based research and evaluation. She has led research and development projects in three Universities, and is the author of many books and publications. Her latest publication is 'Using Educational Research to Inform Practice: A Practical Guide to Practitioner Research in Universities and Colleges 2010 (with C. Winch) Routledge. She is currently a Visiting Professor at the University of Northumbria, where she is working on an evaluation of group work assessment policy and practice. Email: lorraine.fp@btinternet.com



Kate Travers

Kate Travers is a Freelance Museums and Arts Learning Consultant. After completing a Bachelor of Education specialising in Art at Homerton College, Cambridge University, she taught early years and completed a Master of Arts in Museum Studies at Leicester University. Kate has experience of working with arts and learning organisations and teaching and developing education programmes in galleries and museum. She also has experience of creative education practice, project management, evaluation and consultation. Email: katekt@btinternet.com





Using Art Objects in Special Educational Needs Settings
A Responsive Evaluation of The Held in Hand Project
Lorraine Foreman-Peck and Kate Travers, March 2012
© Leicestershire County Council, Heritage & Arts Service