

Engaging Schools 2014-2015 Evaluation Report

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Engaging Schools Pilot Project Summary:

Engaging Schools was pilot project for a future desired citywide, cross-sector Secondary School cultural engagement graduate programme. Plymouth Dance received funding from Arts Council England, as part of the 'Missing Links' Grants for the Arts project, to be delivered into schools over a 12 month period in 2014/2015.

In July 2014, 10 dance graduates were interviewed for the project. Since September 2015 the 2 successful dance graduates have been working alongside 2 Secondary School Dance teachers to support the delivery of the Dance Curriculum, to help develop new dance activities within the school and enable links to citywide dance opportunities. Each graduate was contracted for 3 x 10 days across the 3 academic terms providing a total of 30 days each, a total of 60 days. Each Dance Graduate has been supported by Artistic Coordinator & Mentor, Jules Laville for Plymouth Dance.

Both participating schools are larger than average secondary school and their intake of students are socially and culturally diverse. The schools are both set within communities where there are a high percentage of people living in deprivation. Consequently the proportion of students supported by the governments funding know at the Pupil Premium is also high.

This evaluation has the following sources:

- 1: Second School Dance Teachers - Hannah Hawkey & Gemma Ravenhill
- 2: Dance Graduate - Charlotte Barnes & Emma Pendle
- 3: Senior Teachers/Head of Departments - Ruth Parker Davidson & Matt Taylor
- 4: Students from both participating Secondary Schools - 50% of students whom had regular contact with the graduates.
- 5: Artistic Coordinator/Mentor Engaging Schools - Jules Laville

Engaging Schools Staff/Artists:

Stoke Damerel Community College: SDCC

Dance Teacher: Hannah Hawkey

Dance Graduate: Charlotte Barnes

Head of Performing Arts: Elaine Copestake (on sick leave) Catrina Garret (cover)

Lead coordinator for Internships: Ruth Parker-Davidson

Marine Academy Plymouth: MAP

Dance Teacher: Gemma Ravenhill

Dance Graduate: Emma Pendle

Head of Performing Arts: Matt Taylor

Plymouth Dance: PD

Artistic Coordinator/Mentor Engaging Schools – Jules Laville

Coordinating Producer, Plymouth Dance – June Gamble

Engaging Schools Pilot Project 2014-2015

Evaluation Summary:

Strengths, Weaknesses and Recommendations

Jules Laville Artistic Coordinator/Mentor for Engaging School, Plymouth Dance

From the onset to the completion of this project I have had regular planning and debrief meetings with the dance teachers and graduates observed the delivery of classes, workshops, rehearsals and performances, communicated with senior staff and students to try and establish the effects and value of this projects.

Piloting this project in 2 schools was not within the original plans. However, the fact that we were able to run the pilot working with 2 schools has been hugely beneficial. It has enabled us to understand that the challenges and issues facing dance graduates, dance teachers, art departments are not isolated, and that they exist in many of Plymouth's secondary schools/community colleges.

Prior to the project starting both teachers felt isolated sometimes within their departments and mostly throughout the whole school staffing structure. The dance teachers communicated that they felt their role was continually devalued and deprioritised in terms of focused development strategies and that there was a lack of budget to implement improvement by increasing CPD, networking and community engagement opportunities.

Dance is delivered within the Performing Art Departments at both of the participating schools. There has been recent conversation/debate at SDCC about dance moving back to the Sport Department; at present it remains within Performing Arts. Both dance teachers expressed their concern that their schools were trying to phase out dance altogether although this was never officially announced. Also both teachers said that dance was not profiled as a valuable subject to study, option to take or positive activity to engage with. They shared many stories of students approaching them for advice, as other teachers had been dissuading students from taking dance as an option. This information is alarming especially as there is much research evidence available as to how empowering dance can be for young people, especially for less academic but more practical students.

Within both participating schools I meet the Senior/Head Performing Art Teachers; both valued dance and wanted to support the development of dance delivery and increase opportunity for students. However throughout this project I have observed that Senior Teachers are under so much in delivering their own lessons and the necessary administration that they have little or no time to support their department staff effectively. Through out this project I have experienced some poor communication internally within departments and across other departments. This unfortunately has slowed down and disabled some of the activity opportunities bought about with city dance partners. Over the course of the project the dance graduates and myself have experienced that setting up lunch time/after school sessions, organising school outings to performances/workshops and programming specialist visiting dance artist workshops within school time is extremely complex and can be a challenge to organise with many obstacles in the way.

Despite these challenges overall the Engaging Schools Project has been hugely successful in that it has provided invaluable experiences and skills development for the dance graduates, the dance teachers and the students alike. One dance graduate starts full-time employment in September as a trainee dance assistant. This is as a direct result of her experience gained from her time at MAP. The other dance graduate has been offered freelance opportunities and through the experience her

confidence has grown enabling her to work with young people.

Dance teachers have been inspired and challenged working alongside the dance graduates, enabling them to reflect on and developing their own teaching methods and creative dance practice. The teachers feel motivated, positive about their teaching approach and more connected as a result of the project. For many school student's, their aspirations have been raised through engaging with the inspiring dance graduates whom have provided them with positive role models. The project has also developed and consolidated invaluable links between the schools and citywide dance providers.

My recommendations for developing the Engaging Schools model forward have been drawn from the data collected from for all participating sources. My recommendations are as follows:

- Prior to presenting contracts to arrange a meeting with Principle/Senior staff from participating schools to clarify the project aims, roles and also to agree the schools responsibilities and establish communication procedures.
- Prior to the graduate starting to communicate with the teacher responsible for CPD and training re relevant training needs/requirements. In specific schools to arrange prior training in behaviour management and teaching methods.
- To seek funding that enables to graduate to be in the post for a minimum of 2 years and for a minimum of 2 days a week throughout the academic year.
- To seek a level of funding and support that enables more than one graduate to be placed within each participating school across various departments.
- Either within the Engaging Schools programme or via PD and in partnership with its associated dance partners to establish a secondary schools dance teachers network for Plymouth. Providing training, networking, exchange and skills sharing opportunities.
- At the start to provide teachers and the graduate with the resources to profile the value of and benefits of dance within education. To support teachers and graduates in communicating with Principles encouraging them too invest in dance and provide longer-term strategies within the schools bigger development plans and accompanying budgets for growth and training.
- To formally structure/contract relevant planning and creative development time between dance graduate and teacher.
- To ensure that the dance graduates have access and assist KS3 students/lessons.
- To ensure that the school will support the programming of and support relevant lunchtime and after school clubs.

Teachers & Graduates Summary of Project benefits: Strengths

Reflecting on their own experience of the Engaging Schools Project, teachers and graduates have provided the following feedback with regards to their own skill's development, exchange of teaching methods/practice and support.

Engaging Schools has provided...

- Support with delivery, invaluable creative exchange for planning, someone to share the Responsibilities.
- Less of an isolated feeling at work.
- Both graduates engaged positively with the students and provided important role models for the students.
- CPD opportunities included: learning from the dance graduate new creative choreographic devising skills and new dance warm-up and techniques exercises.
- Through observing and assisting the dance graduates learnt some important teaching methods and behaviour strategies from the teachers.
- One teacher felt like she had learnt useful new teaching methods and behaviour management strategies from the dance graduate that were different from the ones she had been using, providing her with a refreshing approach to her teaching.
- Over the period of the project the graduate's confidence with teaching developed immensely.
- Students became interested in dance opportunities across Plymouth. They now know about Plymouth Dance, Barbican Theatre, Theatre Royal Plymouth & The House Plymouth University.
- Two teachers whom teach and practice different dance styles/techniques in the class was really helped the students to explore and discover their own and new styles.
- *"As a recent graduate with up to date experience, I have been able to discuss dance within further education; informing students about the various pathways they can take for a career in dance",*
Emma Pendle, Dance Graduate MAP
- From their experience teachers felt the project was hugely beneficial for their students, the dance graduates, the schools and themselves.
- Both schools wish to continue to engage with Plymouth Dance and their associated dance providers across the city as a result of Engaging Schools.
- *"Working with a dance graduate has enabled me to keep my subject knowledge/practice updated. I feel re inspired",*
Gemma Ravenhill, Dance Teacher - MAP
- *"There has been a significant increased number of students enquiring about and interested in the after school dance workshops run by Theatre Royal Plymouth."*
Gemma Ravenhill, Dance Teacher - MAP
- Both teachers felt that the quality of the graduate's movement vocabulary helped raise the aspirations of their students. *"She has nurtured students and really helped build their confidence, this in return has developed Emma's confidence".*
Gemma Ravenhill, Dance Teacher - MAP
- *"Having had a fairly difficult first week with us, Charlotte has become a cheerful and engaging member of the C.I. team during Mondays & Tuesdays. New blood is always a good tonic and makes a refreshing impact on our students and staff".*

Ruth Parker Davidson, Senior Teacher – SDCC

- Engaging Schools has been:
Supportive – Engaging – Innovative – Collaborative – Challenging – Motivating – Enabling

Links to Citywide training, workshop and performance opportunities: **Strengths**

As a result of the Engaging Schools Project, a number of students (average of 75%; please see breakdown of student feedback page 7) have experienced ‘participating in’ or ‘go and see’ the following dance activity:

- **Zoiellogic Dance Theatre Company ‘SAFE’**
Workshop: Physical contact and flight, led by 3 professional dancers
- **Zoiellogic Dance Theatre Company ‘SAFE’**
Performance: at The House, Plymouth University co-presented by the Barbican Theatre
Included a tour of The House (State of the Art New Dance House)
- **Maryam Pourian (Freelance Dance Artist & Hartley House Dance)**
Workshop: GCSE dance specialist
- **Hannah Stokes (Dance Artist from Rhythm City)**
Dance Workshop
- **Barbican Theatre Performance Training**
Dance Workshops/Auditions KS3
- **Spindrift Dance Company**
Workshop Opportunity – Training for Dance Graduates
- **U.Dance 2015 - Plymouth Dance Schools Tour**
Performing in and watching the performance
- **Theatre Royal – Dance and Theatre workshops at MAP**
There have been a significant increase number of students interested in the dance workshop from September 2015.

Teachers & Graduates suggestions re how the project could be improved: **Weaknesses and Recommendations**

- Due to the nature of both schools to programme some formal training in behaviour management prior to dance graduates starting in schools.
- Pre-start of contracts to liaison with professional teacher in charge of staff training and CPD at each school to arrange relevant training.
- For the contracts between the schools and PD to contain more detail as to what the specific agreed roles are for the dance graduate and how the school will support their learning. Contracts to also clearly state whom in the school they are responsible to.

- Ensuring that the teachers are supported fully by senior teachers to support them as they in return mentor the graduate. Ensuring that the teachers have previous experience or training in supporting, mentoring and managing other people.
- To ensure that the selected graduates have either experience or knowledge of how challenging schools environments can sometimes be and to have an awareness of the pressures experienced by teachers.
- For future graduate programmes to run for more than one day a week. Suggestion 2-3 days per week minimum. This will benefit both the school and dance graduate.
- Funding to allow the contracts to run dance for 2 years. Feedback has suggested that if they could put into practice what they have learnt this year the impact and benefits would be huge.
- Funding to allow more than one graduate in a school across various subjects. (3-4 graduates per school). The graduates would be able to support each other, while exchanging and sharing their learning and experience.
- More engagement from the start between PD and the schools Principals to establish the benefits of the Engaging Schools Programme and how they can benefit from it. Dance teachers have expressed how disempowered they feel due to lack of budget, CPD and networking opportunities within the dance/art departments. Teachers experience their subject being continually devalued not only by the Principals and other senior staff, but also from other members of staff across departments.
- The dance graduates felt the curriculum was often very restricting and that time to creatively plan was limited or just didn't happen. Dance graduates felt if they had a small amount of creative time to plan specific dance projects with dance teachers and citywide partners for Year's 7 & 8 this would help the profile of dance and raise student's aspirations for dance within the schools massively. It would also ensure that students who choose to continue to study dance in years 9, 10 & 11 (these numbers would also increase as a result of inspiring dance activity in years 7 & 8) would have a broader knowledge of dance, understand the health social benefits, the creative processes and have an all round stronger dance vocabulary to start their BTEC, GCSE dance studies.
- More investment and partnerships with citywide dance organisations/artists is required to programme and maintain regular afterschool dance training activity clubs.

Summary from Student Feedback: Strengths

Half of the students whom had regular contact with the dance graduates fed into this evaluation.

As a result of the Engaging Schools Project:

- 100% of students found it beneficial having 2 dance teachers/artists in the space. As a result they felt their dance skills, knowledge of dance and practical assessments had dramatically improved.

- 100% of students felt that due to the dance graduates they were able to get valuable individual support and advice.
- 80% of students felt they have learnt valuable new dance warm-ups, technical training exercises and learnt new dance phrases/repertoire enabling them to broaden their dance vocabulary.
- 80 % of students felt they have learnt new creative choreography tools/tasks enabling them to be more confident when devising and making their own choreography for course work and practical assessments.
- 80% of students felt the experience of Engaging Schools had helped them become more confident in their dance lessons.
- 60% of students felt inspired to continue practicing dance and possibly go onto studying dance at school (BTEC/GCSE).
- 70% of students felt that they are more aware of citywide dance opportunities and feel inspired to participate in dance activity outside of school by attending regular dance training and youth company auditions.
- 60% of students saw at least one dance performance as a result of the Engaging Schools Project. The professional performances attended took place at a variety of city venues including: Theatre Royal Plymouth, Barbican Theatre and The House - Plymouth University. ('Safe' - Zoiellogic, 'Edward Scissorhands' – New Adventures, 'Othello' – Frantic Assembly, 'The Last Standing Man', James Wilton). The other dance performances included Plymouth Dance's U.Dance 2015 Schools Tour at Stoke Damerel Community College featuring citywide youth dance companies/groups.
- 80% of students participated in dance workshops within school led by local, regional and national dance artists. Dance specialists from Zoiellogic Dance Theatre, Hannah Stokes from Rhythm City and Becky Miles/Maryam Pourian from the Barbican Theatre, Plymouth, facilitated workshops.
- 45% of students participated in dance workshops/auditions outside of school. These workshops/auditions included: Barbican Theatre Performance Training taster workshops and Company b auditions, Theatre Royal Plymouth school dance hub groups, Groovement Project and Rhythm City.
- 80% of students reported that from their point of view the Engaging Schools project had hugely benefitted the school, the dance graduate, the dance teacher and particularly improved their own learning.

Student Recommendations for future Engaging Schools Programmes: Recommendations

- For the dance graduate to be in post at the school for a minimum of 2 years and for a maximum of 2 days per week.
- For the dance graduate to be able to offer lunchtime or afterschool one to one dance training (as in music).
- More investment from the schools to provide afterschool and lunch time dance classes.

- Regular links to local, regional and national dance artists visiting the school for delivering training workshops for students and CPD opportunities for teachers.

Feedback statement:

Gemma Ravenhill, Dance Teacher - Marine Academy Plymouth

When Emma initially started, I was a little apprehensive and somewhat intimidated due to her professional training background at a dancer. However, over the course of the year Emma has become an invaluable asset and a respected member of the performing arts team.

She has been extremely helpful with regards to planning and delivery; she has taught the students and me new movement material through the implementation of new methods to develop student's technique and movement vocabulary. She has been a positive role model for the students raising the aspiration of many students.

Over the course of the year, I have come to rely on Emma for her innovative teaching material and her support regarding behaviour management. It can be very challenging at times.

I have a holistic approach to teaching and I am passionate about setting high expectations and raising student aspirations. I have always tried to help redirect students exhibiting behaviour problems by replacing disruptive, unproductive patterns with positive behaviours using dance.

For me as, the dance teacher, Emma has become an irreplaceable asset to me and she has been a great constant support, motivating me with regards to my own CPD and challenging my delivery in sessions. She has helped me to plan and develop teaching strategies to enable me to teach the students more effectively with regards to the appropriate subject matter and technique.

Emma has become a good friend and been a fundamental part of the students learning journey over the past year.

Feedback statement:

Hannah Hawkey, Dance Teacher - Stoke Damerel Community College

The whole experience has been extremely positive from my perspective. Initially Charlotte was quite nervous and even intimidated by some of our students who come from a range of backgrounds (some extremely difficult to deal with and with complex needs). The working relationship we have developed has been mutually beneficial in terms of our practice. I have found the experience refreshing and it has helped me develop my own techniques, exercises and even learn some new ones, which is fantastic. As a teacher you can go stale quickly in dance if you don't have fresh creative input. Charlotte has appreciated the mentoring and support I have provided her in terms of classroom management and dealing with the issues, which essential to learn when teaching dance in schools. We have discussed any problems we have encountered very openly and honestly and I think Charlotte has gained a very real perspective into teaching dance and the associated politics.

It has been extremely beneficial to have another practitioner to bounce ideas off and whom I can trust to lead small sections of the lesson. Charlotte has to some extent taken on some of my responsibilities but this has been under guidance as I am responsible should there be an issue.

We have worked really well together, sharing techniques and strategies and creating choreography. I have enjoyed having Charlotte's skills and creative input in my lessons and I know the students have too.

To some extent there has been some added pressure to provide guidance and mentoring for Charlotte, at times I found this challenging. However I don't see this as a negative thing at all, in fact it has raised my game and given me a fresh perspective on how and what I do. It has assisted me in the development of my teaching and prepared me well for next year when I will be responsible for two other teachers delivering dance. Charlotte's feedback about my mentoring skills has been brilliant and really helpful in terms of developing my practice.

Charlotte's strengths lie in her practice and the fact she is fresh from professional training. She is very much a role model and the students can see she knows what she is talking about in term of her physical and creative approach. She shares her knowledge and skills in both discussion and practical lessons; students have developed a respect toward Charlotte for this and she has developed some really positive relationships with students in both dance and in other subjects I teach! There is nothing she has refused to do, she has been keen to gain as much experience as possible and as a result she has had experienced a range of subjects and years I teach as well as learning about my roles and responsibilities.

The Engaging Schools Project has impacted greatly on me as an individual- giving me someone to bounce my ideas off. We have been able learn of each other to some extent, which has been mutually beneficial. Charlotte has been the glue between my school 'bubble' and the world of dance outside and that has been an invaluable lifeline. It is no secret that the arts are under fire in today's political climate especially within education; having a second person, moral support has strengthened dance at Stoke Damerel Community College without a doubt.

Feedback Statement:

Emma Pendle, Dance Graduate – MAP

Gemma and myself have worked really well as a team during the dance classes. I would have liked to have lead more warm-ups and taught more dance routines. However, as the students struggled with choreography we did need all of the time we could get helping them to create group work and solos; warm-ups were often brief or didn't take place due to lack of time. I would have liked to have the opportunity to engaged with a wider age range/year groups, but time and contracted hours was a limiting factor here.

There were times when I had to teach the group on my own and I felt slightly unsupported; however I know now that this was mainly due to my initial fear and lack of confidence. On reflection these sessions always turned out fine and we got the work set for us done with no problems. I learnt a lot from this project in terms of behaviour management, engaging different groups of young people and the delivery of dance with in schools. I learnt it is completely different from delivering dance outside of school and in the community. This has been very beneficial, a massive learning curve for me as a professional dance practitioner at this early stage in my career.

The Engaging Schools project has made me realise where dance sits within schools and how it is often devalued and de prioritised. As an outside practitioner this has inspired me to teach and create more opportunities in the community and in schools as after school classes to engage more students.

Since completing this project I have been offered a full time job as a trainee dance teacher/assistant at the Plymouth School of Creative Arts. I am very excited about my new job and I know that I would have not been offered the job if it had did not have the experience I gained from this project.

Feedback Statement:

Charlotte Barnes, Dance Graduate – SDCC

I felt it took a long time for the students to trust me. I was very nervous and had never been at a school like Stoke Damerel Community College. My only school experience was the school I attend, which was KEVICS in Totnes. I have gained so much experience from this project and after the initial poor start; it took the school weeks to get my DBS through, I started to enjoy this new experience and offered to volunteer for one day a week, which doubled my hours at the school.

I found the general behavior really challenging and it took a while to feel I had a role. I also to begin with found it difficult to communicate effectively with Hannah. I felt a bit lost, but felt inside I had so much to offer. I found Hannah's methods of teaching restricting and she kept on telling me that there was no point teaching contemporary dance to the students because they weren't interested. They only want to do modern and hip hop etc. Also I was reminded often that they didn't like warm-ups and they just like to get on with their choreographic tasks. I experienced them struggling with this; they didn't seem to have the skills, knowledge or experience to choreography solo's and group work etc. They appear often lost and dis interested. I knew that they needed to develop their movement vocabulary and movement terminology to enable them to work effectively and feel enabled. I knew the only way this happening was going to happen was by them being taught warm-up and technical exercises, being enabled to explore their movement style and become more confident with practice.

Jules knew I was struggling so arranged a meeting with Hannah and Elaine, Head of Performing Arts. Slowly things did begin to improve. I was able to share some warm-up/technical exercises, students soon warmed to them and very slowly the students movement vocabulary began to expand. I slowly began to develop a good repoire with the students; they would come to advice or me when they needed help and respected my way of teaching.

I soon realised that Hannah was also a fairly inexperienced teacher and that she was struggling to support me in my role as she was also very under supported in her newish role. Jules did arrange meetings with more senior staff, which helped to some point, but with staff often being off sick the things discussed as solutions were often difficult to follow through due to every ones workload. However I guess this was a real life situation and I am grateful to have experienced it. It made me tougher in my teaching approach. I really toughened up! I also gained the skills to be able to plan and execute projects for a term. Observing Hannah and other teachers, I was able to take certain aspects of their teaching styles, and incorporate them into my practice.

I would have liked more time within school to meet with the dance teachers and other staff to plan, discuss what I need to pre-prepare, discuss projects ideas and how to deliver the curriculum more creatively. Some formal behavior management training earlier on in the project would have also been very beneficial.

And finally I have found this project very challenging, but through taking small steps I feel I have achieved a lot that will stand me in good stead for my future. I plan to stay in contact with the school and hopefully I will be back next term to teach some technique.

General background information, experience and delivery

Gemma Ravenhill, Dance Teacher - MAP

Gemma has been teaching dance full time professional for the past 5 years. MAP is the only school she has worked at as a qualified dance teacher.

Gemma teaching the following classes within her role:

KS3 DANCE Years 7, 8 & 9

KS3 DRAMA Years 7,8 & 9 (occasionally)

KS4 BTEC DANCE AND DRAMA Years 10 & 11

KS5 BTEC DRAMA Years 12 & 13

GCSE DANCE Years 10 & 11

Hannah Hawkey, Dance Teacher - SDCC

This has been Hannah's first year of teaching Dance specifically post qualifying since doing her NQT.

Hannah teaches the following classes within her role:

Primary 4-11 years

KS3 DANCE, DRAMA, MEDIA, HISTORY and GEOGRAPHY Year 7

KS3 DANCE Year 8

KS3 DANCE & BUSINESS STUDIES Year 9

KS4 BTEC DANCE Year 10

KS5 TRAVEL & TOURISM, BUSINESS STUDIES Year 12 & 13

Emma Pendle, Dance Graduate – Plymouth University - MAP

Emma graduated in 2011, has had some previous experience, teaching dance in a primary school as part of the PE.

Within her role for Engaging Schools Emma supported the delivery of the following classes:

KS4 GSCE DANCE Year 10

KS4 BTEC DANCE Year 10 & 11

KS3 DANCE Year 7

Charlotte Barnes, Dance Graduate – Falmouth University – SDCC

Charlotte graduated in 2014, she has had no previous experience of teaching in a school, but had a little experience of assisting to teach dance in the community.

Within her role for Engaging Schools Charlotte supported the delivery in the following classes:

KS3 DANCE Year 7

KS3 DANCE Year 8

KS3 DANCE Year 9

KS4 BTEC DANCE Year 10