Research Question/focus: To what extent can Cultural Education close the attainment gap for Pupil Premium pupils?

SLiCE: Louise Parrish

Your organisation/alliance: Tor View Teaching School- East Lancashire Inclusion Partnership (ELIP)

Your Cultural Partner(s): More Music, Morecambe.

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Introduction:

Rationale for the research question?

As a Senior Leader in an Outstanding Special School with responsibility for assessment and progress, I have a vested interest in researching pedagogy that will ensure our pupils achieve the high aspirations we set.

Also, as a Champion for the Arts and Creativity in our Teaching School Alliance, ELIP, I welcome the opportunity to evaluate the impact of arts practice on the National Curriculum subjects.

Aims of the research

The aim of the research was to identify if and how schools can close the attainment gap of Pupil Premium Pupils by engaging with a Cultural Partner. The project took place over 8 weeks. As Music lends itself as a tool to teach most subjects, the schools were asked to identify what they believed to be the gap for their learners. This meant that the project addressed the schools "real life" gaps.

Scope/limitations and time-scale of research

The work in the 3 schools with the identified teachers was planned to start in the Summer Term of the academic year 2015-2016 (June and July 2016). The delivery was planned initially as a 10-week project. This timescale was strategic to ensure that the project was long enough to maximise impact. It was also planned that the Artist from the Music Cultural Partner would attend the schools weekly.
At an initial planning meeting, with representation from all 3 schools, the schools shared their identified gap and shared their school setting, the Education and Inclusion Manager (EIM) from the Cultural Partner, immediately identified that the project needed an Artist with skills to ensure the needs of all the settings were met. The EIM named an artist but his availability was limited. As a result of this the project actually only lasted 8 weeks. Although this would limit the impact of the intervention I also felt it was as important to ensure the schools received a valuable experience and therefore I was confident in accepting this compromise.

Context:

Wider education context & aims and expectations of the SLiCE programme

As a Senior Leader in an Outstanding Special School, Assessment, Progress, Teaching and Learning are key areas of my responsibility.

Tor View School aims that all our teachers (NQT's-Leadership) demonstrate good and outstanding teaching.

The framework by which we grade lessons identifies key qualities of teaching in the Outstanding grade that I make direct links to Arts and Creativity. I have identified the key words in yellow.

	Progress	Behaviour	Teaching	Teaching Methodology	Match of Work	Resources	Assessment
OUTSTANDING	Almost all learners make considerably better progress than might be expected, as a result of the very good teaching.	Learners behave very well and are engrossed in their work. The excellent relationships are most conducive to their personal development.	Teaching is based upon an expert knowledge of the curriculum and the undivided learning needs of pupils, and is stimulating and rigorous.	Teaching methods are imaginatively selected to deliver the differentiated objectives of the lesson. Pupil key skills and learning needs inform the selection of teaching methods, resources.	The work is sensitively matched to the needs of the individuals and high expectations ensure that all learners are challenged and stretched whatever standards they are working.	No time is wasted and teaching assistants and resources are well-directed to support learning and personal development.	Assessment of learners' work successfully underpins the teaching and learners have a clear idea of how to improve. Pupils have opportunity to evaluate their own learning.

I see the Arts and Creativity as tools by which we can deliver all National Curriculum subjects and we explain to our staff that to be creative in your lesson is to tip the grading from Good to Outstanding.

This project allowed me to research and generate data regarding the potential impact of Creative teaching, that I could share with my teaching team and the Alliance.

Woods, 1990, *Teacher skills and strategies* (London, Falmer) established 4 features of creative teaching;

>   *innovation, ownership and control and relevance.*

Links between these features and the highlighted attributes in lesson observation framework can clearly be identified.

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As a Pupil Premium reviewer for ELIP I am commissioned to visit schools in the Alliance with the rationale to review the use and impact of the Pupil Premium grant.

In their Pupil Premium report in 2012, Ofsted explained that…

the best school leaders know what they want to achieve from each of their interventions and they evaluate progress thoroughly to make sure these are working. They also have well thought-through plans for building on their success.

And

Where schools spent the Pupil Premium funding successfully to improve achievement, they shared many of the following characteristics. They:

- *drew on research evidence (such as the Sutton Trust toolkit4) and evidence from their own and others' experience to allocate the funding to the activities that were most likely to have an impact on improving achievement.*

This project will provide research that can be drawn upon to support the decision making in schools, about how to allocate Pupil Premium finding ie does working with a Cultural Partner provide good value for money when attempting to close the attainment gap for PP pupils?

<u>School Alliance – key features/location/regional information</u>

East Lancashire Inclusion Partnership is strategically led by Tor View School, a school for pupils aged 4-19 years with a wide range of learning difficulties. The Alliance is made up of at least 25 schools that include Mainstream Primary and Secondary School, Secondary, Primary and all age Special Schools and Specific School provision – Emotional Behavioural Difficulties Schools.

My previous SLiCE project included all special schools from within the Alliance, for this project I proactively recruited Mainstream and Special Schools. I also made a conscious effort to target different schools ie urban, rural and special. I felt this would bring different Pupil Premium gaps and as part of the research I wanted to measure the impact of the work in 3 different areas to compare progress and unpick reasons for the rate of progress. As predicted all 3 schools involved in the project had very different gaps; Urban Primary school wanted to focus on Multiplication, Rural Primary school wanted to focus on teamwork and developing resilience and the All Age Special School focused on Creative Writing.

My professional role/development

This project allowed me to be a strategic member of the Research and Development arm of the Teaching School agenda. During the project I became the Chair of the Research and Development Teaching School Committee and a strategic lead of the North West Specialist Assessment Group. These positions within the teaching school Alliance allow me to lead and develop research and assessment pathways for the North West.

The project provided an invaluable opportunity to develop a relationship with a Cultural Partner that previously has worked with various schools in the Alliance. This opportunity allowed time to build on and develop these relationships and hopefully provide some sustainability.
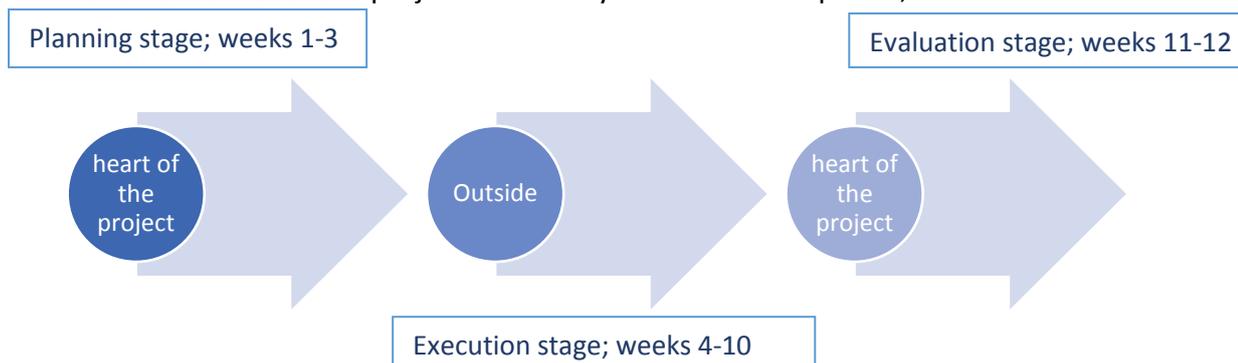
As with my previous project, the steepest learning curve was in managing a project that included 3 schools and a Cultural Partner. I continued to develop my understanding of the complexities of this, including how to contact the key people in schools. With this project the chain of command within the Cultural Partner was slightly more complicated. My first point of contact and initial planning was with the Education and Inclusion Manager (EIM) at the Music Cultural Partner and then he appointed an appropriate artist to do the work in the schools. The reason for finding this challenging was that I had shared some detailed conversations with the EIM and believed he understood the project and its aims. I then relied upon him to share this detail with another person. The EIM did achieve this but I felt it imperative that I met with the Artist before the project commenced to ensure the detail has not been "watered down".   Unfortunately, the only time available to achieve this was directly before the Artist undertook his first session in one of the schools.

It became apparent at the meeting that the artist had been slightly confused with the purpose of the work in schools and he had planned for the genre of music the groups had chosen and not the "gap" to be addressed. Thankfully due to artist's skill he was quickly able to address this issue and refocussed the work on the intended learning focus. He used the genre of music as a tool to teach the skills, this is how I intended the work to be carried out.

SLiCE Methodology:

Action learning is a process of learning and reflection that happens with the support of a group or set of colleagues working on real problems with the intention of getting things done (McGill & Brockbank, 2004)

At various times of the project I found myself in different places;

Planning stage; weeks 1-3

Evaluation stage; weeks 11-12

heart of the project

Outside

heart of the project

Execution stage; weeks 4-10

During the planning and evaluation stage I felt at the heart of the project. I was directly involved in the development of the research project which included having professional conversations about how we wanted to measure the impact of the work with the Cultural Partner.

In the planning stage I wanted to ensure that all 4 partners (The 3 schools and the Cultural Partner) had a shared ownership of the project. It was important that all involved felt that they were "getting something out of it". This is where I used, as Goleman describes; *Visionary Authoritative* and *Democratic* style of Leadership. To ensure buy in from the Cultural Partners I ensured I actively listened to their priorities and weaved them within my desire to demonstrate impact of working with a Cultural Partner in closing the gap for Pupil Premium pupils.
By being in the heart of the project at the planning stage it allowed me to make sure we were all clear about the purpose of the project.
I predicted that during the work in the school I would be outside the heart of the project and wanted to make sure during the planning stage that everyone understood the research questions and why, how, when and what we wanted to find out.

During the execution stage my role changed, in the fact that I was no longer at the heart of the research but I had to rely on the Cultural Partner and their ability to not only execute as we had planned but to also create the circumstances in the schools where the relationship between the artist and the teacher was one that promoted good action research. To create

this relationship the artists were given a number of tools that will be discussed in the Methods section on this report.

Action research is a form of collective self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social or educational practices, as well as their understanding of those practices and the situations in which the practices are carried out… The approach is only action research when it is collaborative, though it is important to realise that action research of the group is achieved through the critically examined action of individual group members. (Kemmis and McTaggart 1988: 5-6)

To avoid me being completely estranged from the project during the execution stage I had interim meetings with the teachers and artist. I also kept in constant contact via email. These meetings were useful as they ironed out any issues and allowed me to ensure the project stayed focused.

Methods/Data Collection/Research Methods

What did I intend to find out?

I intended to find out, how, when working with a Cultural Partner, can schools' close the attainment gap between their Pupil Premium pupils and their peers.

What were the most appropriate ways to evidence this?

To measure the progress of the pupils I asked the teachers to identify a measure they currently use to measure attainment. I asked the schools to baseline the pupils taking part in the project and re assess after the project had completed.

The urban primary school decided to use their times table test. They identified the pupils currently struggled with the 7 times table.

The all age SEN school used a Creative writing exercise linked to their Key Stage 3 English topic.

I also asked these 2 schools to complete the Character Quality Characteristics (CQC) Criteria (appendix 1) to baseline and are assess post project.

The rural Primary School wanted to close the gap in the characteristics identified on the CQC and therefore only used this tool to baseline and re assess.

To be able to evidence the impact I also asked the schools to baseline and re assess, post project Pupil Premium pupils not involved in the project (Control group). It was important to manage the variables that the pupils not involved in the project were a similar age and ability.

The control group is defined as the group in an experiment or study that does not receive treatment by the researchers and is then used as a benchmark to measure how the other tested subjects do.

(www.yourdictionary.com/control-group)

The Urban Primary school is 3 form entry and therefore was able to take the control group pupils from another year group class.

The Rural Primary school used pupils from each year group-reception pupils to year 6 for the project. Therefore, pupils from each year group where identified as the control pupils. Due to this arrangement of pupils it prompted me to also look to draw out the difference in rate of progress between reception aged pupils and those in year 6. This was bearing in mind the below thinking;

Edward De Bono suggests that

creativity, typical in young children, is a function of their innocence. If you do not know the usual approach then you are more likely to come up with a fresh way of looking at something.

Six Thinking Hats Paperback – 26 Oct 2000

As children grow older they become more affected by the views of others and this begins to inhibit their creativity. Around the ages of 8-10 the importance of what others think can inhibit creativity.

The Journey to Excellence, Fostering Creativity, Education Scotland.

In the SEN school the ability of the child was the most important factor in choosing the control group. Due to the small teaching group nature of a special school, control pupils were chosen from a similar ability group in the next Key Stage.

<u>How did I capture this evidence and who gathered it?</u>

The teachers were responsible for collecting the data.
The research methods included;
- Character Quality Characteristics, Pre and Post (appendix 1)
- Pre and post assessment materials- decided by the teachers.
- Formative reflective reports, teachers provided with notebooks
- Field/Reflective notes (artists)

The Pre and Post Character Quality Characteristics assessment provided the project with quantitative data based on qualitative performance indicators. The scores were then presented on a tracking document (appendix 2) to be able to show direct comparison.

I also asked teachers of the SEN school and the Urban Primary to assess the pupils' attainment with a pre and post assessment. I asked the teachers to decide how they wanted to achieve, using their school's current assessment procedures. Unfortunately, due to the nature of how this evidence has been presented to me, I can only provide a summary for the Urban Primary (see appendix 4).

The formative reflective reports provided qualitative data to highlight "wow" moments and possible reasons for this. I wanted to encourage the teachers to take a deeper look into the work the artist was doing and how he created the learning environment for the pupils to exceed.

Findings and Analysis

What the quantitative data tells us

A summary of the results from the Character Quality Characteristics Assessment can be found in appendix 3.

Appendix 4 summarises the results from the Urban Primary School Maths assessment.

What the quantitative data tells us (Character Quality Characteristic results for all 3 schools involved- appendix 3)

Analysis of Urban Primary School Results

Participating group size- 9 pupils

Control group size – 3 pupils
- One pupil made Exceptional progress in all areas apart from Perseverance. (This pupil also made Exceptional progress in their assessments.)
- No pupils in the Control group made exceptional progress compared to at least one pupil making exceptional progress for every characteristic (not the same pupil).
- There are 10 (19%) examples of Good progress in the Participating group
- There are 9 (50%) examples of Good progress in the Control group.
- There are 31 (57%) examples of no progress made in the Participating group
- There are 8 (44%) examples of no progress made in the Control Group
- There are 5 (9%) examples of negative progress in the Participating group
- There is one (5%) example of negative progress in the Control Group.

What the quantitative data tells us (Assessment results for Urban Primary School only- appendix 4)

- There are 6 (66%) examples of Exceptional Progress in the Participating group
- There are 3 (60%) examples of Exceptional Progress in the Control group
- There are 3 (33%) examples of Good progress in the Participating group
- There are 2 (40%) examples of Good progress in the Control group

Louise Parrish SLiCE research project 2015-16

- No and negative progress 0 examples in Participating and Control group

Analysis of Rural Primary School Results

Participating group size- 9 pupils
Control group size – 5 pupils

- There are 8 (15%) examples of Exceptional progress in the Participating group
- There is 1 example (3%) of Exceptional progress in the Control Group
- There are 17 examples (31%) of Good progress in the Participating group
- There are 18 (60%) examples of good progress in the Control group
- There are 26 (48%) examples of no progress made in the Participating group
- There are 11 (37%) examples of no progress made in the Control Group
- There are 0 (0%) examples of negative progress in the Participating group
- There is 0 (0%) examples of negative progress in the Control Group.

Analysis of SEN All-Age School Results

Participating group size- 7 pupils
Control group size – 5 pupils

- There are 0 (0%) examples of Exceptional progress in the Participating group
- There are 0 examples (0%) of Exceptional progress in the Control Group
- There are 19 examples (45%) of Good progress in the Participating group
- There are 5 (16%) examples of good progress in the Control group
- There are 23 (55%) examples of no progress made in the Participating group
- There are 25 (83%) examples of no progress made in the Control Group
- There are 0 (0%) examples of negative progress in the Participating group
- There is 0 (0%) examples of negative progress in the Control Group.

Findings of Quantitative and Qualitative (Teacher and Artist notes and conversations)

The data doesn't show any very strong trends in favour of the Participating groups making significant progress than the Control groups. There are a number of possible reasons for this;

- The small size of the control groups mean that the results are based on a smaller group of pupils with less opportunity to average out the scores ie these pupils in the control groups maybe particular able Pupil Premium pupils.

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- The attainment gap chosen may not have been a 'real' gap.
- The length of the project (8 weeks contact time) was too short to achieve any major progress. This, I think, to be particularly influential in the progress made by the pupils in the SEN school. In their very nature, SEN pupils in general and in particular this group of learners, take a considerable length of time to attain skills.
- The Control group and Participating group where not ideally matched.

There were however some trends in Exceptional and Good progress in favour of the progress made by the Participating group.

In the Urban Primary School where no pupils in the Control group made Exceptional progress and in the Participating group there where 8 examples of Exceptional progress. In discussions with the Class teacher we identified why this may have occurred;

- The artist created a learning environment where the pupils didn't feel pressured in getting the correct answers.
- The artist was able to quickly adapt the activities accordingly to meet individual needs.
- The artist never described the lesson as a "Maths lesson" which avoided any pre-conceptions or negative connotations around the subject.
- When the pupils knew they were going to perform, they were very eager to perfect their skills.

In the Rural Primary School there were 12 examples of Exceptional progress in the Participating group and only 1 in the Control group. In discussions with the Class teacher we identified why this may have occurred;

- The artist created a learning environment where the focus was not about being good musicians but about bringing to the lesson your skill that will be used as a starting point- pupils where encouraged to have a go.
- The Head Teacher reported that the whole school had benefited from the project, the artist brought a sense of excitement and calmness that had a "ripple" effect amongst that staff team.
- The Head Teacher also explained that she felt that the power of 'Music' should not be underestimated. She explained that music has access points for all learners.

In looking closer at the Rural Primary School data, I can analyse the rate of progress between the ages of the pupils

- The Reception aged pupil made 9 levels of progress across the character quality characteristics
- One of the Year 1 pupils made 12 levels of progress across the character quality characteristics

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- The Year 6 pupil made 6 levels of progress across the character quality characteristics
- The Year 5 pupil made no levels of progress across the character quality characteristics

These comparisons of progress made between Reception and Year 1 pupils and Year 5 and 6 pupils does seem to provide evidence of the theory made in *The Journey to Excellence, Fostering Creativity, Education Scotland* that as children grow older they become more affected by the views of others and this begins to inhibit their creativity*.*

In the All-Age SEN school there were 19 examples of good progress in the Participating group compared to 5 examples in the Control group.   In discussions with the Class teacher we identified why this may have occurred;

- The artist was able to very quickly adapt his planned activities to meet the needs of individual learners.
- Pupils seemed more engaged, this could be attributed to the "something different" factor and the fact that the pupils had fun-they didn't realise they were learning.

The Arts Council and art and cultural organisations have developed 7 quality principles to help measure the value and impact of Art and Culture organisations. These principles help define 'excellence' with the sector and I would like to identify what the qualitative data tells us happened during this project in relation to these principles

Quality Principle	Evidence in the project…
Striving for excellence and innovation	The idea of performing helped the learners develop their strive for excellence. I observed all 3 performances and the learners demonstrated a sense of pride in their work. I am confident that both the artist and the schools strove for excellence throughout the project and this was led by myself as Project manager.
Being authentic	The inspiration for the work was based on the learner's ideas and baseline skills. They were exposed to real live music.
Being exciting, inspiring and	Teachers reported that pupils were engaged throughout.

engaging	They had fun and didn't think they were learning their Maths and English targets. The lesson was different to the norm and learners looked forward to their time with the artist.
Ensuring a positive and inclusive experience	All needs were met and pupils felt empowered as their ideas were listened to and weaved into the product.
Actively involving children and young people	As above
Enabling personal progression	Learners baseline skills were taken into account and built upon. The artist ensured the learning activities were accessible for all. This provided a good starting point to develop skill. Learners were encouraged to progress at their pace. Learners were made aware of their own personal target.
Developing belonging and ownership	See above

Summary Statement

At the project evaluation event I asked the teachers involved, to identify one strategy/skill the Artist used in the classroom that they felt facilitated progress. They responded with;

- Adaptive
- Encouraged ownership
- Demonstrated expertise

The SEN teacher explained that she felt the main reason the pupils progressed was that the artist was quickly able to adapt the learning experience to meet the needs of the learners, this included adapting to their learning need as well as physical (use of instruments).

The Rural Primary teacher and Head teacher identified that the artist was happy to and provided opportunities for the learners to have ownership over the development of the project. This, they felt, empowered the learners and they flourished with the responsibility.

They also identified that the artist was very talented/skilled in his trade and because of this he was able to as Woods (1990) described…

Be innovative, give ownership, take control and make relevant

…the learning experience.

This project was immensely successful by having the "right" artist. The artist's energy was infectious and his skill in meeting everyone's needs in three different settings was impressive.

Implications for future practice/research

- For Cultural Education and the alliance?

ELIP now have strong links with the Music Cultural Partner and are looking to develop this relationship further during a community based project for the coming year. The project will engage Tor View School's community and invite all stakeholders to be members of a community choir.

- For staff development?

One teacher involved in the project was a Newly Qualified Teacher (NQT) and has now successfully completed her NQT year and has subject responsibility for Music. She is also managing a range of Music based activities out of school.

- For school engagement with a Cultural Partner?

All 3 schools reported their enjoyment of the project and hoped to gain further funding to fund future projects. They felt that they would be happy to work with More Music in the future.

- For further action research

Ensure timescales are more generous. In future practice I will ensure that the work in the classroom is not rushed and that more time is dedicated to the planning of the project with all those involved, including the teachers.

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