The National Gallery 'Picture in Focus' Project
A Research Evaluation

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Executive Summary

The National Gallery approach to using art as a stimulus for teaching and learning, successfully developed in primary schools, was extended as part of an innovative project in secondary schools. The research that is the subject of this report found that the approach has great potential, and for that reason we would strongly encourage its extension to a wider sample of schools.

The headline findings were as follows:

- Teachers felt that the project had resulted in new ways of working which promoted freedom in pupils' thinking and the use of skills across subjects.
- The great majority of pupils and their teachers reported sustained interest throughout the project.
- The single focus of the painting inspired creativity.
- The project inspired a more flexible and integrated approach to the curriculum.
- Teachers identified benefits for cross-departmental work, particularly in relation to increased knowledge of one another's teaching and the opportunities to share and discuss ideas.
- Teachers discussed a sense of momentum and ways in which they felt the project could be developed and extended to include further departments within their school.

One of the many examples of evidence of enhanced pupil learning inspired by Titian's painting is encapsulated by the views of these pupils:

Pupil	It's a good painting to choose as well.
Researcher	How?
Pupil	There are lots of levels to it.
Pupil	You can talk about it quite a lot.
Pupil	There's a lot of features.
Pupil	There are mysteries.
Pupil	We're thinking about the sounds as well now that would be happening in the background.
Pupil	You can debate over what happened.
Pupil	There are little things in the painting that we haven't been told what they are so we can guess and it helps.

Background

This report builds on the two other research evaluations by Dominic Wyse and Laura McGarty from the Faculty of Education at the University of Cambridge completed as part of their work for the National Gallery: 1) The National Gallery Initial Teacher Education Cultural Placement Partnership: A Research Evaluation, and 2) Evaluation Report: Out of Art into Storytelling. The central feature at the heart of all three evaluations is the ways in which art can be used as a stimulus for teaching and learning. The other reports included literature reviews of theory and research in relation to, a) the potential value of out of school learning; and b) current knowledge on the teaching of literacy. The current report does not repeat previously cited work in its literature review but acknowledges that this literature is significant, and by implication builds upon it. This report narrows the focus of its literature review to cross curricular teaching and learning, something that was a particularly important feature of the project.

The division of the school day into clearly defined curriculum subjects has a long history. The 'Regulations for Secondary Schools' issued in 1904 specified a minimum number of hours each week to be dedicated to different subject areas for pupils up to the age of 16, marking 'the establishment of the modern era of secondary education in England.' (McCulloch, 2003, pp.34-35). This was intended to ensure all pupils studied a 'general' curriculum, and to delay specialisation (Gordon, 2003, p.190), though 'left little space for teachers to innovate' (*ibid*). The pattern of considerable statutory regulation in the first part of the 20th century was also a feature of primary education. Until 1926 the legal powers established in the Elementary Code meant that the Board of Education held the right to approve the school curriculum and timetable through the work of inspectors. In 1926 the regulations were revised and any reference to the subjects of the curriculum was removed (Cunningham, 2002). It wasn't until much later that government began to take a strong interest in the curriculum once more.

In 1977, Her Majesty's Inspectorate published 'Curriculum 11-16', setting out a common curriculum of 'areas of experience' which included the aesthetic and creative, the ethical, the linguistic, the mathematical, the physical, the scientific, the social and political and the spiritual (Proctor, 1985 p.59) and highlighting the limitations of a framework based on core subjects. The Government's Department of

Education and Science (DES) took a very different line and consequently in 1980 it issued a document which outlined a compulsory curriculum, with each subject allocated a percentage of the total timetable (Gordon, 2003, p.201). Following the Conservatives' 1987 general election victory, the National Curriculum was passed through Parliament. Gordon (*ibid*) observes the similarity between the 1904 and 1988 lists of subjects, indicating the long-term rigidity of the subject boundaries (see also Wyse, 2010 in relation to the primary curriculum). It is however argued that the updated Curriculum 2000 provides 'a less prescriptive and more flexible National Curriculum' (*ibid*, p.185).

Hargreaves et al. (1996, p.86) describe the secondary school curriculum structure as timeless and as a 'sacred norm.' but with subject divisions which are arbitrary. They identify several reasons for this, including teacher specialisation when training, teacher identity and a personal attachment to their subject, the longstanding history of subject divisions, the departmental politics of the secondary school, the currency of subject-based study in terms of entry into further and higher education, and the status differences between subjects (pp.86-87). This division of the secondary curriculum into academic subjects makes it difficult for schools to establish cross-curricular teaching.

A 2008 OfSTED report described different types of curriculum innovation observed in secondary schools which allowed for a departure from firm subject divisions and a greater flexibility in the timetable. The report describes four secondary schools who chose to base their curriculum on larger blocks of time rather than on short periods. This either involved these sessions organised for the length of a project, or each department or year group having an agreed number of sessions which could be used to support cross-curricular work or to pursue a particular topic in greater depth (OfSTED, 2008, p.10). It was acknowledged that 'organising this was demanding and required regular review' (*ibid*). Another school worked to a standard timetable from Monday to Thursday and pupils spent Fridays studying a subject for a whole day, with the year groups on a rotation. The report found that teachers spoke very positively about the advantages of being able to concentrate on a particular project or topic for an extended period (*ibid*, p.14).

Barnes (2007, p.165) draws attention to a report by Wilde *et al.* (2006) which found that Higher Education tutorial and admissions staff were worried about incoming students' lack of deep understanding of the core ideas of individual subjects and the links between subjects or themes. The report highlights concern that secondary schooling leads to learners who 'are not fully aware of the utility of ideas developed in one place in a course for thinking in another area' (*ibid,* p.3). Frean (2008) suggests that a cross-curricular approach is ever-more appropriate, suitable for a generation familiar with assimilating and making sense of information from multiple sources and media and linking it with other information. The way in which this approach 'cuts across subject-matter lines, bringing together various aspects of the curriculum into meaningful association' means that it 'reflects the real world which is interactive.'(Shoemaker, 1989 *cited in* Boyle & Bragg, 2008, p.7).

Links have been drawn between a cross-curricular approach and creativity. It is suggested that 'creative insight often occurs when new connections are made between ideas or experiences that were not previously related' (NACCCE, 1999, p.40). This implies that the drawing of links prompts a creative process, both in their formation and as a result of their being drawn. Craft (2006, p.35) notes that 'creativity is defined as a cross-curricular thinking skill' by the DfEE/QCA National Curriculum handbook and argues that argues that 'all subject areas in the school curriculum (or beyond) are inherently conducive to the development of a learner's creativity' (*ibid*, p.37).

Depth, transferability, relevance and creativity should therefore be key elements of cross-curricular work. Marton and Säljö (1976, p.7) identify the concept of 'deep-level' as opposed to 'surface level' processing. Atherton (2010) further outlines the features of 'deep learning' in the school context as characterised by the relation of knowledge from different courses to one another and of ideas to everyday experience, with an emphasis on student-driven learning.

Methodology

The methodology adopted for the research was a qualitative evaluation research design (Patton, 2004). An abductive orientation (Lewis-Beck, Bryman & Liao, 2004) allowed *a-priori* features, such as the framework set by the National Gallery, to be combined with the emergence of outcomes grounded in the data through the *constant comparative method* (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) of data analysis.

Research Aim

To evaluate the National Gallery's *Picture in Focus* project.

Sample and Data Collection

The sample of schools was as follows:

- Ibstock Place School, Roehampton (Independent, Mixed)
- Hillview School for Girls, Tonbridge (Foundation Secondary Modern, Girls)
- Central Foundation Boys' School, Islington (Voluntary Aided Comprehensive, Boys)
- Langdon School, Newham (Community Comprehensive, Mixed)
- Parkview Academy, Haringey (Community Comprehensive, Mixed)

Data was collected from each school through a one day visit to each site, including:

- Semi-structured interviews with the staff involved in the project
- Semi-structured interviews with a selection of pupils involved in the project
- Observation of *Picture in Focus* lesson(s)
- Observation of non-*Picture in Focus* lesson(s)

See Appendix 1 for further details of the participants.

Nearly all teachers who were directly involved in the project were interviewed in each school. The pupils were selected for interview by their teachers, who had also gained parental consent. The schools selected the lessons for observation based on the requirement that at least one *Picture in Focus* lesson and one standard lesson by the same teacher be included.

Relevant material gathered from teachers' feedback forms as provided by the National Gallery from their initial training on 22nd January 2010 and background details gathered at the conference on June 11th 2010 have also been included where appropriate to support the analysis.

Participants had agreed with the National Gallery that they were content to take part in the research. It was confirmed before the interviews began that participants were taking part with their informed consent and that they had the right to withdraw without prejudice. Interviews were digitally recorded and fully transcribed. The transcriptions for group interviews did not provide a name for each speaker, hence the quotations contained in the report pertain only to the groups in general and not to individuals.

It must be noted that the schools involved in the evaluation were self-selecting, rather than being selected at random from all those involved in the pilot project. It is possible that their willingness to participate in the study may have been reflective of a higher level of teachers' overall commitment to the project. The self-reporting nature of interviews is a key limitation. Observation of lessons recorded in field notes provided a means to triangulate some of the perspectives reported at interview.

Analysis

For initial analysis, key words and themes were allocated to the data in a system of coding. The words and themes were selected following a read-through of all twenty four transcripts and ten lesson observations, noting each theme which arose, with close attention paid to the aims of the *Picture in Focus* project under evaluation. Following this process, code names were allocated to each of these themes, and the transcripts colour-coded accordingly. This included all answers that were semantically relevant to the identified key words or alluded to comparable concepts. Codes were then amalgamated or sub-divided based upon their frequency and range, and codes from the final list were applied to the transcripts using HyperRESEARCH qualitative data analysis software.

Findings

Ibstock Place School

Ibstock Place carried out the *Picture in Focus* project with one form group – 21 of the 87 pupils in Year 8, through Art, Dance and English. The pupils were in the same group for all three subjects.

Their project centred on the pupils' creation and development of a contemporary interpretation of the painting, setting the bathing scene in a modern changing room and casting Diana as a captain of a sports team, the nymphs as players, the handmaiden as a physiotherapist and Actaeon as a paparazzo. In Art the pupils worked in small groups to create a relief collage of their devised contemporary scene and 'mood boards' as visual representations of each character, as well as using clay to create models for animation. This school was able to swap one of the pupils' twice-weekly Art lessons for a Dance lesson – a subject not usually part of the pupils' curriculum. This allowed the Art teacher to attend the Dance lessons, supporting the Dance teacher, and to incorporate elements of the Dance lesson into future *Picture in Focus* Art lessons. In Dance, pupils interpreted the different characters and the event depicted in the painting through movement to produce a filmed performance. In English, pupils used their experiences of the project to write in different genres including a diary of Diana's day, an information leaflet about the painting and its narrative, an advertisement for the National Gallery and a traditional or contemporary playscript of the events depicted.

Hillview School for Girls

The group selected for the project at Hillview was a Year 8 form, comprising 25 pupils of the 200 pupils in the year group. This group was taught together for Art and Geography and visited the Gallery, but were spread throughout different sets for English and Science. Project-based work in these subjects was therefore extended to other pupils who had not experienced it in other areas of the curriculum or attended the visit.

In Art, pupils looked at artists who had used contemporary film and produced an animation which told the story of Diana and Actaeon, and were introduced to new software to edit the final product. Geography lessons included work on globalisation, comparing modern with historic trade, with links to the painting drawn through work on the origins of pigments. Pupils selected their own theme from the painting in English and developed it to create narratives inspired by the painting, reflecting upon and annotating their own work. Science lessons involved the conversion of the laboratory into an 'art studio' for the design of the perfect predator (linking the predator-prey relationship to Actaeon's hounds). The project also filtered into extra-curricular work, involving 6th Form students helping the Year 8s with short films in 'Cineclub.'

Central Foundation Boys' School

The project at Central Foundation was run with one Year 7 English set, one Year 7 Art group and two Year 7 Drama groups over a ten week period, with all lessons for these classes in these subjects given over to *Picture in Focus.* Pupil grouping and timetabling therefore resulted in the boys as a year group experiencing the project in between one and three subjects, or not at all. Pupils who attended the gallery visit were selected from those who had been in at least one of the four groups.

In English, pupils focused on the different senses and the perspectives of the people depicted on the painting and collectively created a book with sections which flapped back and forth such that the 'story' could be read in any order. Art lessons involved the creation of an animation, using videos of scenes which pupils involved through Drama had acted out in order to tell their peers the story, allowing them to recreate it with clay models. Pupils in the Drama lessons also devised their own versions of 'The Jeremy Kyle Show' talkshow in Drama, exploring the emotional and physical aspects of characters from the painting and from elsewhere in Greek mythology.

Langdon School

This school selected a Year 7 form to take part in the project, involving 29 of the 360 pupils in the year in *Picture in Focus* lessons in Art, DT, English, ICT, Music and PE.

These subjects worked together towards a final performance which incorporated elements from all subjects. Storyboards developed in Art and English informed the narrative, the details of which were developed in English through work on storytelling and dramatic monologue. A backdrop was created in Art through abstract collage inspired by the themes of the painting and by the work of other artists. Pupils used ICT in the filming of their performance, working with sound and moving image and in Music composed lyrics and a tune for a song to tell the story. In PE they developed the characters' actions in the painting into choreographed movements. Props for the piece were created in DT, with levers and linkages forming Actaeon's

hounds. The final outcome was filmed in the style of a comedy caper chase around the school and included performance in the school's outdoor amphitheatre space, retaining the story but translating it to a contemporary setting. Pupils presented elements of this final product at assemblies and at school events.

Parkview Academy
At Parkview the project was run as a four-hour project for 27 Year 7 pupils (one class from a 12-form entry), involving Art and English. Pupils started the day by drawing their own 'myth maps', adding locations, characters and key words to A2 sheets of paper. This was followed by guided writing on the theme of metamorphosis, and a session of monoprinting – an activity which is too involved to fit into a standard Art lesson.

Lesson Observations
The observations of lessons, both project-related and non-project-related provided a 'real' context to compare with the views expressed in interviews. The standard Art lesson at Ibstock Place involved no external stimuli and was focused upon the technical aspects of drawing. Pupils did not have a choice of medium and worked individually. By contrast, the *Picture in Focus* lesson involved a choice of media, group work, and divergent thinking to develop the modern character equivalents for their collage. Similar differences were noted in the Central Foundation Art lessons – the standard lesson was focused upon still-life drawing skills, with pupils working individually. The *Picture in Focus* lesson involved the modelling of pupils' own choice of animal out of clay in preparation for animation. This prompted wider discussion of perspective in relation to their size and the lesson included a discussion of 'Hounds of Actaeon', a re-telling by popular young people's author Anthony Horowitz from his <u>Myths and Legends</u> collection.

At Hillview, the standard Geography lesson and the *Picture in Focus* lesson were more comparable. In the standard lesson, pupils were encouraged to draw links between a recent visit to a nearby wood and Utah's more extreme sandstone environment, connecting the wider curriculum to their local area. The lesson also incorporated ICT, through the use of laptops, to watch video clips and develop PowerPoint slides. Similarly in the *Picture in Focus* lesson, pupils were given an interactive and practical activity, using lengths of ribbon on their maps. In both lessons pupils were reminded about demonstrating National Curriculum aims and about the development of competences.

Of the lessons observed, we felt that the Year 7 Drama lesson at Central Foundation was a particularly good example of teaching and learning focused on the project. A real sense of engagement when pupils discussed their previous *Picture in Focus* Drama lesson was observed. The lesson involved pupils using explorative strategies such as the freeze-frame (and included a re-cap discussion of their previous use of inner monologue and soundscape in relation to the project) and working towards a final performance – Diana and Actaeon's appearance on a Jeremy Kyle style television talkshow. The warm-up and exploration of the painting was focused upon the characters Diana and Actaeon, with pupils finding a space and creating their own still pose under instruction from the teacher, including for example 'Actaeon as a powerful hunter' and 'Diana filled with anger.' The pupils' familiarity with the required style of presentation for their devised talkshows seemed to allow for a greater degree of focus upon elements of characterisation and physicality, aspects which were certainly enhanced by the dramatic extremes in both of these areas permitted by the format. The in-depth study of character through Drama would also have complemented and been complemented by pupils' work in other subjects, English in particular. It also provided a context for the work which had some form of meaning in the world beyond the classroom.

Lesson observations also revealed the limited quality of the data projection of the original painting via interactive whiteboards, further highlighting the value of the National Gallery visit to see the colour and detail of the original Diana and Actaeon.

The following themes draw mainly on the interview data but are also an extension of some of those evident in the observations.

New ways of teaching and learning

It's really fun, because instead of just learning the story in English or just doing a picture in art we get to do loads of other stuff.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

Teachers felt that the project had resulted in new ways of working which promoted freedom in pupils' thinking and the use of skills across subjects.

I'm really quite keen for them to see these transferable skills and to develop their thinking skills, because I do find they are very set in their ways for

each subject. I think with the changes in the national curriculum it's really important to address it.
Teacher, Parkview

... it's changed the way they are learning, the way in a class I think they feel a little bit more freedom.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

There's been good feedback from the other two departments involved because they haven't seen this class do anything of that nature and they were pleased and surprised with what they'd done, and I was as well.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Pupils felt that the change to their normal way of working resulted in a greater enjoyment of their lessons and a resultant increase in the amount they had learned.

And you learn a lot more if you have fun, especially for me I think.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

It's a lot more interesting, we're exploring different things… so I think we're a lot more focused and can actually get on with it.
Pupil, Hillview

We definitely feel like it's a really good thing to do, we've learned a lot about it, it's like a different way of learning, we don't really do anything like this.
Pupil, Hillview

One teacher described a direct impact of using an 'Art' mindset in English lessons and the effect this type of thinking had upon her pupils' work:

It's really helped with descriptive writing, because I was saying the space is your blank page, the forms, figures, animals, are your nouns for examples, your adjectives are the colours and the similes and the metaphors are all the other pieces of space that are filled with colour. I said you want to avoid having an empty page, you've got to fill it with colours, adjectives and similes and so on. So I think that metaphor really helped with their descriptive writing and some of the pieces are quite impressive.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

One of the pupils from Ibstock Place described how the map she drew in her English lesson became a resource to draw ideas from when it came to writing her story.

It was felt that the project had provided opportunities for pupils to be more thoughtful about their work.

I like forming my own views more because when we sit in normal lessons it's textbook, copying it out.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

I think it's opened up my way of thinking.

Pupil, Ibstock Place

So I think particularly the students in 8F and that group, the English set, have responded really brilliantly and I think the work that they're producing is of a much more thoughtful nature and it's more reflective and it's more detailed than those students who are starting to produce something who haven't been involved in anything from the start.
Teacher, Hillview

So they'll have created a story and then around it they will have their annotations of why they've created it in that way, what techniques they've used and actually being reflective in their learning.
Teacher, Hillview

Both teachers and pupils noted the opportunities which the project provided to cater for learning in a wide range of styles, particularly in relation to the visual immediacy a painting as a stimulus and the increase in practical activity which the project prompted.

I was really fascinated by their initial responses, they could have gone on and on and on. With a book I guess there's less in an instant, so the conversation, that dialogue and vocabulary might take place over a longer period of time.
Teacher, Langdon

Something that I picked up on was the EAL students, the students with English as a second language, they've really been able to get involved a lot in the project because it's been reinforced and the story's been told in many different ways in many different subjects, so it's made it a lot easier for them to access what we're trying to do, access the curriculum. So maybe for example if they're doing a story in English, it might be a bit more difficult for them to access that, whereas they can do something in art or music and get involved in that way.
Teacher, Langdon

I like working kinaesthetically, I actually like doing something and not just sitting down writing stuff.
Pupil, Langdon

I think it actually helps people to participate in lessons more because a lot of people don't enjoy just sitting down and writing.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

It reinforces the inclusive ethos we've got here, this idea that every student should be able to access what we're doing, and really having it across a number of lessons, a number of subjects has really reinforced their learning.
Teacher, Langdon

Teachers at Parkview outlined the benefits of their day spent working off-timetable:

Normally you'd only expect probably to read through this and do the questions in one hour. We were able

to do everything because we had the time to. So that was one of the major differences. I think actually some of the output from some of the students, especially the lower ability ones, was a lot better than would be expected in class.
Teacher, Parkview

Engagement and interest

The majority of pupils and their teachers reported sustained interest throughout the project. Participants' discussion of the project demonstrated their motivation and a sense of purpose, despite in some cases a perhaps natural initial reticence.

Actually having taught it today I was pleasantly surprised at how engaged the students were, because to start with they came in and were saying we've seen this painting and we've done quite a lot of lessons and it's getting a bit boring, but actually ten minutes into the lesson they were all engaged, they were all really enthusiastic, so it's been really positive.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

They said when they were first told they were going to spending eight weeks looking at this painting they thought it would be really boring, but they said it wasn't at all, and in fact it was really good they were saying to keep revisiting it in different contexts and they felt their learning was more because of it.
Teacher, Langdon

In my opinion, and I'm being completely honest with you, I would say that apart from the dance, this whole project is really good.
Pupil, Langdon

I have to say I was wrong about that. If anything it definitely wasn't boring.
Pupil, Langdon

The following excerpts from pupil interviews illustrate their engagement with the painting:

Pupil	It's a good painting to choose as well.
Researcher	How?
Pupil	There are lots of levels to it.
Pupil	You can talk about it quite a lot.
Pupil	There's a lot of features.
Pupil	There are mysteries.
Pupil	We're thinking about the sounds as well now that would be happening in the background.
Pupil	You can debate over what happened.
Pupil	There are little things in the painting that we haven't been told what they are so we can guess and it helps.

Pupils, Hillview

When we first saw the picture we thought it was a bit perverted, but then as we got to see it we thought the artist was showing that these women weren't ashamed of themselves, they were actually quite proud and he'd used creativity in art to show that and they'd showed that they turned out to be even more powerful than a hunter and the hunter could be associated with strength.
Pupil, Langdon

I like writing, I may not be the best at it, but I do have to say, I like writing stuff like stories and writing speech and stuff like that. So in English when we got to write dramatic monologues I thought it was pretty good because we got to put ourselves in other people's shoes and we had to sit down and say well I know how I would react, but how would someone with the responsibility and the power of say a Greek goddess deal with something like that. I mean she killed him but it's not just about the fact that she killed him, it's how she did it, it was indirectly but she did it. And the fact that she didn't have to do it but she chose to and why she chose to do it.
Pupil, Langdon

This teacher's observation also highlights the level of interest and engagement she witnessed in her lesson:

When we were doing it in English for the first lesson we had the picture displayed and they were just thinking about what they could see and what they knew and what they could notice and then what they wanted to know as well. So many original things and so many details that showed a real interest, rather than just feeling like they had to respond.
Teacher, Hillview

Some of the pupils in one interview group expressed boredom with the project:

But it gets a bit much, a bit annoying. Because we went to the National Gallery on a trip and we saw the painting and everyone liked it, but now, every lesson we're seeing the painting and it gets boring.
Pupil, Hillview

Experiencing Creativity

Examples of creativity were cited by teachers and pupils in relation to planning, teaching and learning.

Occasionally I've hit a brick wall and thought I'm running out of ideas and steam, what do I do now and then gone back to the picture and looked at it and looking at it has inspired my lesson ideas. So it's been creative not just for the pupils but for me also I would say.
Teacher, Central Foundation

I think they'll feel like they've really given to it, because it's not at all me teaching things to them, it's all their own material, it's just come from structured ideas and tasks.

Teacher, Ibstock Place

In normal lessons you probably wouldn't have the chance to completely adapt a picture or a painting to how you want it to be.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

But they're doing a lot of painting, they're working a lot from their imaginations, they're doing a lot of critical thinking, talking about the characters, the atmosphere, really delving deep into the one painting and then getting ideas from that one painting. I think they feel that they're being very creative.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Teachers at Hillview felt creativity had been compromised because they had been unable to be fully cross-curricular due to timetable constraints, and that as a result:

We know that the real cross-curricular thing would have much more creative flow to it in that sense.
Teacher, Hillview

Two of the teachers at Hillview (Science and Geography) particularly welcomed the project, due to the fact that they were looking at the development of creativity within their subjects as part of the School Development Plan.

The way we dealt with it in science definitely is creative because first of all we turned our labs into art studios for a while and we used the theory that we figured out from the story and linked it to predator/prey relationships.
Teacher, Hillview

The Hillview pupils were on the whole positive about the creative opportunities presented by their Picture in Focus lessons, though were less convinced by the involvement of traditionally less creative subjects.

A lot of the artwork and the writing we've done is mainly our own and we haven't copied off the board or anything.
Pupil, Hillview

I think if they just kept it to the creative subjects then it would be more interesting.
Pupil, Hillview

One of the teachers from Langdon felt that there was further to go in terms of creativity through the extrapolation of themes from the painting itself. She did however have concerns with regard to the amount of time required both in the planning and teaching of a theme to do it justice.

So from a creative point of view, it's quite difficult to know how far you expand from it, we stuck mainly to the painting itself... But without serious time… I think things like themes are more difficult to really plan for.
Teacher, Langdon

The need to develop new lesson plans and work in a different way was identified by teachers as a key element of creativity:

So I think to keep us all creative it would be good to do different paintings [each year/time].
Teacher, Langdon

I've been much more aware of the creative process in lesson planning because I'm starting totally from scratch.
Teacher, Central Foundation

I think it is creative because it's looking at something completely different. Again, I come back to the curriculum, we do the same thing, we churn it out, this is actually another interesting take and it means that they can use equipment, use different programmes and it's bringing everything in together in one place.
Teacher, Langdon

One teacher described how a more creative approach refreshed her planning:

In terms of writing a scheme of work it's reminded me of what I think is important in drama and what I value I think.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Staff identified the impact they felt this had had on their pupils:

The children that I taught were definitely engaged by the creativity and the fact that there were links from one session to another
Teacher, Hillview

To get them thinking creatively in a different way I think is good because I think a lot of the time they come to us very open minded and you become no this is how it's done and sometimes it's nice to give them a bit of ownership and let them print however they wanted and decide how they wanted their story to go, because all their work is different, which is nice. I think sometimes in secondary school it can become very uniform.
Teacher, Parkview

Pupils too described ways in which they felt they had been creative:

All the subjects we did we expressed it, PE, dance, that's expressing yourself, being creative, expressing and emphasising the moves of bathing women or as a hunter. Music you express yourselves to lyrics and rhythm, we made up a song in music. In art we looked at pictures.
Pupil, Langdon

That's basically what creativity means, being creative is using your imagination, expressing what's in your mind.
Pupil, Langdon

It's good to do different things because then you understand more and you feel like you're doing something really good and creative.
Pupil, Central Foundation

Cross-Curricular Approaches

The project inspired a more flexible and integrated approach to the curriculum in some cases, but curricular pressures were also a source of limitation. The nature of the cross-curricular work and extent to which existing planning was adapted to incorporate the project varied greatly. Teachers described how the lesser curriculum and assessment pressures on Year Sevens and Eights meant they were the year groups selected for the project.

...you haven't got quite so much curriculum, it's the exam syllabus, it's about the school wanting to prepare Year Nine for Year Ten, and going oh no but year 8s at that time of year are always doing this, and I quite like the idea of Year Seven, as a transitional element as well from primary school.
Teacher, Central Foundation

With the [Year] Eights, I think you can give a little bit of freedom because you don't have the pressure of the exam. So that helps you a lot. When you are with GCSE it would be different because you have to look at the assessments, so you need to make sure you don't give too much freedom because they have to address all the requirements.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

A teacher at Parkview suggested that it may be possible to involve Year Nine now that SATs are no longer in place for this year group.

Some teachers described being unable to fully integrate *Picture in Focus* into their lessons due to the way in which they planned. When planning in some cases takes place a year in advance, some teachers felt unable to implement anything extensive, whilst others were able to re-work their usual plans to incorporate the project in some way.

We are having one two hour standalone lesson, it's the way our modules are set up, they're all planned a year in advance and they're very tightly packed into the year, so we weren't able to bring the painting scheme into the overall lessons.
Teacher, Hillview

Others were able to change what they usually taught in order to bring in *Picture in Focus*:

For me it's been quite interesting to get away from our normal curriculum teaching databases and spreadsheets and whatever, and this has been an interesting take because I've been using Moviemaker with them to create a video diary.
Teacher, Langdon

Well I've integrated it into another scheme of work in order that the children can do their end of year exams and that's on different genres of writing, so writing to inform, for example, writing to persuade. Most of my activities have been designed around different genres of writing but using the painting as the subject for those types of writing.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

I've left what we normally do which would be chromatic scales and the James Bond theme as a performance, they're getting their performance skills anyway...
Teacher, Langdon

This last teacher also described how a Year 7 class would usually work on performance skills, with composition introduced in Year 8, but that the artistic stimulus had prompted the possibility of more creative work earlier on. He intends to incorporate this in future schemes of work. At Ibstock Place, a Dance lesson (a subject not usually part of the timetabled curriculum at this school) was substituted for pupils' usual second weekly Art lesson, demonstrating a flexible approach to timetabling by the teachers involved. The reasons for these differences in the extent of implementation were as a result of school-wide, departmental, or individual practices, which varied across the case studies.

One teacher reported having to find staff members who felt they could be suitably adaptable to include the project in their lessons:

The things you'd get back would be 'this will mean a massive change to our scheme of work', 'we're not sure whether we want to take the time out to rewrite the scheme of work', 'not sure how it's going to fit in with our current theme or what we're trying to cover', so it was trying to find the right sort of people that would be willing to be involved.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Another questioned to what extent it was realistic for several departments to adapt their curricula:

If you're getting three departments to do this over a term, are they [the pupils] missing something which the government would be requiring them to do?
Teacher, Central Foundation

These experiences and concerns demonstrate the need to involve staff who are likely to be committed to cross-curricular working and given the opportunity to plan well in advance of the project.

Teachers described that one benefit of the cross

-curricular approach lay in the opportunities to cover subject matter in more detail, due to the fact that the basics only had to be covered once, thus leaving more time across all incorporated subjects for deeper exploration

It's saved us lessons of going through the story and teaching the story or skirting on it and doing it very superficially. So without the other two subjects, art in particular wouldn't have got to the stage where it's at.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

For the students, their knowledge of it is so massive compared to if they were just doing it with me, because I only see them once a week. They've got a double lesson which is good, but still it's not very long. But because they've been doing it in all their other subjects, when they come to see me I can ask them something and they can remember it from someone else, or if they're not sure they can just enforce their knowledge in my lesson and then they get it and they just remember it.
Teacher, Langdon

What really benefited was the in-depth coverage that English allowed, which we can't do in art, there just isn't time, it's more the skills and the techniques, and almost the symbolism and the narrative behind some of the works has to be done very fast and glosses over the key points, whereas English, how they know that story is unbelievable, and how they've looked at it in so many different ways, it's just wonderful and that would be a nice compliment for the pupils on it.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

And because they know so much about the story and the painting you can just do so many different things with them that all relate to it, that's been really good, rather than just spending so long on the story and the picture. That's been the best thing.
Teacher, Langdon

Teachers reported that this increase in depth and variety promoted the making of connections by pupils.

I think with the six teachers all working to the same goal, at a similar time it's really reinforced everything that we've been doing and it's given them the opportunity to think in the music lesson not just about music, they're thinking about English, art, how they're going to record it in ICT, any movement that could go with it and all the subjects are fitting in together.
Teacher, Langdon

But without realising it has become very cross-curricular because in my room they talk about art and drama and I know [teacher's name] has said they talk about the other two subjects in her room, so they've made the link that actually subjects aren't in isolation but they do overlap. So in that sense I think it has been cross-curricular, from the pupils' point of view.
Teacher, Central Foundation

It's certainly something, the skills that the students have learned, they've brought them into different lessons. The skills they've got in story telling have had an impact on doing their lyrics for their song in the music lesson and all those things have really helped it.
Teacher, Langdon

One teacher described how she had found the project a useful device in linking the different elements of her scheme of work on writing genres.

It's actually added cohesion to that scheme of work, because when you're looking at different genres I think there can be an element of them being disjointed, separate texts, but the painting has actually given it a sense of cohesion, which it didn't have before.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Pupils also identified the increased depth and formation of connections:

Well because we all have so much more to say and to do because we understand what we're doing so much better because we're doing it in so many different subjects. So like in art we'll think what it would look like then in dance we'll investigate what they'd feel like, and then when we have to write about it then we know so much more.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

I think so, because as we're going through each lesson we're learning a bit more to know about what we're doing, so by the next lesson we would be learning more and we'll understand what the teachers are doing. Normally if we're doing one subject, like say for English, one a day just learning one thing, like for storytelling, poetry, but as we're doing many lessons each teacher's explaining why it's happening in the story, what it's for, so we understand more as we go through the days.
Pupil, Langdon

This pupil articulated a conceptual connection he had made between his work in Art and in Dance:

Beatriz Milhazes, her abstract doesn't really look like art, but what she does is she uses her imagination to turn something 3D plant into 2D, or say in dance we're not exactly showing that we're bathing, but we're emphasising and making the move better and bigger to make it look like it's a dance move and make it impressive.
Pupil, Langdon

Teachers and pupils at Hillview suggested that the project could in future be more successful from a cross curricular view.

It's not as cross-curricular as I think we'd like. It is in that we've done the plan, but… we need a bit more time to get it so it runs smoothly.
Teacher, Hillview

This was perhaps in part down to the choice of subjects in this school: no other school incorporated work which was directly science-based but instead focused on more traditionally 'creative' subjects (illustrated by the fact that every school chose both Art and English, to fit with the 'narrative painting' though other subjects were also successfully incorporated).

It doesn't really lend itself to a science lesson, there's nothing obviously sciencey in it, you have to look a bit further and think about the story.
Teacher, Hillview

This was supported by the pupils from Hillview:

Pupil	Well our last science lesson was about the painting and I don't know…
Pupil	We had the dog and the stag and we had to paint different parts of the prey.
Pupil	I don't really see how that's sciencey.
Pupil	There is a link but it's a really weak link.

Pupils, Hillview

I'm not really sure why we're doing it in science and geography though, I don't see how it relates.
Pupil, Hillview

Whilst the predator-prey relationship is part of the Key Stage 3 science curriculum, its relevance to the project was not apparent to these pupils.

Increased communication between departments

Teachers identified benefits for cross-departmental work, particularly in relation to increased knowledge of one another's teaching and the opportunities to share and discuss ideas.

So this way I get to speak to people in art, and actually it gives me an opportunity to learn about new things, just as the kids are learning as well, how things work in art, how things work in music. And then it's actually seeing how they adapt certain things, then looking at how I can do that in ICT but how to actually bring it into ICT.
Teacher, Langdon

If you were to extrapolate it out to the whole school, having more cross-curricular things I think that would really inform us of what we're all doing.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

We have a really positive enthusiastic group of people and it was lovely to bounce ideas around and to hear what other people were doing and to take as well, where someone has been doing one thing that's perhaps inspired someone to do something else or to

adapt slightly what they've been doing.
Teacher, Langdon

To work with other teachers and to share ideas, because you do tend to stay in your departments and it's really good to talk to other people.
Teacher, Parkview

It was acknowledged that an increase in communication between staff regarding lesson planning required time had proved challenging to integrate into busy timetables.

It works because we meet up, I think it would be better if we could meet up more, if it was possible, because a Friday after school is the only time we can all get together, and on Fridays people are still really interested in doing it, but then we always need more time, and the time when it gets to four, quarter past four, people want to go home.
Teacher, Langdon

Several teachers acknowledged that observation of or even team teaching within one another's lessons was or would be a useful feature of the project, but that being available at the right time did not happen often.

I think it is nice to have been able to go and see each other's lessons, it's just not always possible.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Both teachers and pupils voiced concerns regarding repetition and overlap arising from this cross curricular approach. This was particularly the case at Hillview, where staff were concerned that pupils may have perceived the degree of continued focus on the painting as repetitive.

Because even though they're not doing exactly the same thing, their perception might be that they've done it in the same way, but they haven't because we're steering it in different directions, but we've perhaps got too many multiple directions, or seeming to them because of the way it's structured.
Teacher, Hillview

This teacher's concerns were proven well-founded when the Hillview pupils were interviewed.

Because in art we've mainly learned everything about it and now in all the other lessons we're learning basically the same thing.
Pupil, Hillview

The teachers need to tell each other what they've done each lesson.
Pupil, Hillview

However, these pupils were very positive about the idea of making cross curricular links, due to the increased understanding they felt they could

gain from them, but felt that there needed to be a greater variation in the material.

Teachers at Langdon also found that some overlap was occurring at times, due to the fact that they could not immediately communicate any diversions which occurred in their lessons.

So that's a bit tricky, the communication between people, it's just impractical, and who's going to read emails every five minutes from someone saying 'I did this in my lesson'?
Teacher, Langdon

Other pupils commented that the work did not feel repetitive, but instead encouraged them to take a more global perspective:

My group in art, we're doing about the hunt, when Actaeon's just going out, just before he meets, then someone else is doing the feast. But when we go to English we're doing something completely different and we're doing a different point of view from the painting.
Pupil, Central Foundation

For one teacher, this 'pressure' to ensure that her lessons fitted with those of others provided a positive form of discipline:

I think that it's good for my practice, definitely, because if you've got a deadline to meet for a project rather than just ongoing lessons around English, you know that other classes are relying on you keeping up to a certain pace.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Teachers at Hillview reported that they found that their lessons needed defined endpoints to allow the teachers of the other subjects to pick up where they had left off. The direction of lessons also had to be carefully managed by teachers to ensure pupils did not steer discussion towards material that another teacher intended to cover. Other schools planned so that their lessons were sequential only within rather than between subjects and so this was less of a concern.

We planned the overall project in big terms together, but our individual classes have been planned separately.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

In some cases the sense of repetition felt by pupils may have been a result of timetabling challenges caused by accommodating pupils who had not visited the National Gallery. Whilst highlighting the value of the Gallery experience in terms of understanding, it also demonstrates the deficit experienced by those who were unable to attend:

But we have to go over stuff, because of people from other lessons, because it's only 8F that went, we're having to cover stuff that we already know.
Pupil, Hillview

Those students who have been to the gallery have led much more creatively right from the beginning.
Teacher, Hillview

This was not only the case in relation to the gallery visit, but also with regards to lessons themselves – schools were unable to make every lesson link due to the fact that not all pupils were in the same classes for all subjects, as a result of setting and other grouping.

I think it would be nice to have the whole year group doing it, it would be nice to have all of the children experiencing cross-curricular, because at the moment some boys in my class only experience this project in English, so for them it's not cross-curricular in the slightest, it's only through conversation that they've realised actually it is cross-curricular. So that would be nice to see.
Teacher, Central Foundation

One of the pupils from this school directly supported this comment, despite not having heard it made:

We only see it from one point of view, I only do English and I think I'd like to do it in art and drama as well.
Pupil, Central Foundation

Several teachers commented on the' unfairness' which resulted from fitting the project into the school timetable.

'We have twelve year 7 classes, so even choosing one class means that everyone else doesn't get to do it, which is unfair really.'
Teacher, Parkview

I think that this is a chance that every student should have, not just a student who's in a group that works particularly well, because otherwise it limits a majority and only a minority get that benefit.
Teacher, Hillview

Pupils at Ibstock Place initially expressed their concern that they were missing out on the material the other classes were covering, but one pupil suggested that they felt they had learned what they would have done anyway and added to it.

Teachers considered the implications of managing the project such that a whole year group could be involved, most realistically through time 'off timetable', given the inherent restrictions in the standard school timetable, but

there was variation between opinions on whether this would be practicable.

> The logistics of trying to do it with the whole of the year group wouldn't work for us.
> *Teacher, Hillview*

> I'm wondering whether or not, if you wanted to get the most out of it, that [time off-timetable] is actually possible. Because with the realism of cover, you would never be able to have enough teachers taken off timetable to implement that with an entire year and then the impact of having you being covered.
> *Teacher, Hillview*

One of the teachers from Central Foundation acknowledged that including a whole year group across all involved subjects would be impossible to implement, but that selecting a smaller group of pupils from within a year to experience the project in all involved subjects would be unfair. She suggested that their more utilitarian approach (as outlined above) was the best compromise:

> This way, working with four different groups we're actually giving the opportunity to a lot of children.
> *Teacher, Central Foundation*

This teacher felt that time off-timetable – would be 'too chaotic'. A teacher from Parkview suggested that it could only be possible to do this with an entire year group with 'lots of provision and organisation throughout the school' and that she could 'see it becoming quite difficult to implement and organise.' This teacher described organising cover as 'more and more difficult' and one of her colleagues cited the 'Rarely Cover' policy. Hillview teachers described this situation as 'the realism of cover.'

At Parkview, an off-timetable day did take place, as staff were unable to implement the project into a sequence of lessons. This was for one class rather than for the whole year group. Whilst having one day off-timetable for the project was permitted, a teacher explained that requests to be allowed to repeat this in future may not be granted, and that similar 'allowances' would have to be made for other departments in the interests of fairness.

> I think obviously it can be improved and tweaked, and obviously if we were to do it again we're not necessarily going to be allowed to have the whole day off, because of it being the pilot and it being quite a big thing, we were allowed it.
> *Teacher, Parkview*

> Some other departments would say 'Well why are we doing this for English and art then, why isn't science and maths getting anything?' So that's basically what would happen.
> *Teacher, Parkview*

Teachers suggested that they would like choose when the project was planned and delivered, to spread the workload in a way which fitted with their school as a whole. Overlap with for example an Ofsted inspection or a period of heavy coursework marking meant that some teachers felt the timing of the project did not allow them to do it justice.

From masterpiece to contemporary themes

Ibstock Place in particular developed a modern context for the painting and project, inspired by the work of the artist-photographer Tom Hunter. Pupils created mindmaps and collages to explore the characters of the figures in the painting and created a contemporary scenario outlined below:

> ...it could be a changing room, the way the nymphs on the back were like seating and the fact that Actaeon was opening the curtain and looking at them... Then they started to think the nymphs could be the players, Diana could be the team captain because she's the leader, Actaeon could be the paparazzo, and the servant is a physiotherapist.
> *Teacher, Ibstock Place*

These new roles were subsequently applied to their dance interpretation.

> Setting that whole scene in a modern day context in order firstly to make the pupils and myself excited about it and also just to look at it in a different way, not necessarily copy the picture, because that's one way we have looked at it, by physicalising what's happening in the painting, literally putting ourselves in those positions, but we wanted from that to see how it feels to be in that position, put yourself in the modern day character and then find movement from there.
> *Teacher, Ibstock Place*

At Central Foundation, pupils retained the essence of the mythological characters but translated them to a contemporary context: their own television shows closely based upon the 'Jeremy Kyle' talkshow, with characters from the painting and others from mythology including Arachne and Minerva.

> I like the Jeremy Kyle idea because it's like they're mixing modern day shows with past features, like Actaeon and Diana, seeing why they hate each other. It's actually a good idea, I didn't do it, but it's really good.
> *Pupil, Central Foundation*

Further discussion of this device can be found

later in the report.

At Langdon School, pupils worked on a whole-group film, a comedy chase around the school and its grounds involving the hounds of Actaeon and several cameo appearances from teachers – translating the traditional story and its characters to a modern setting.

One teacher outlined the relevance she felt that the project had to her pupils in the world beyond the classroom:

They see beyond what they're learning in school, it's not just the art lesson that they attend or the English lesson that they attend, it's something which is linked to the outside world that they can then take forward. It encourages cultural awareness outside,
Teacher, Central Foundation

Experiencing the National Gallery

Teachers responded positively to their day at the Gallery:

It's nice… meeting the other teachers and working with them. Very impressed with the resources, the resources were brilliant, how we had everything written up…
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Coming away from the day, I feel like the ideas were racing through my head, and we were walking around talking saying we can do this, I can think about this approach, I love the way people have brought this up, let's take that, let's use this, let's run with that. I think it is engaging straight away
Teacher, Langdon

I came out from the day really quite excited, and I think everyone in the group, all the teachers, were quite excited by it as well.
Teacher, Langdon

Teachers who had been unable to attend the CPD workshop due to commitments in school expressed their wish that they had attended – an indication of the perceived value of this day.

It would be much better if I had been there and then come back, because I would understand more. She [another teacher] did report to me, but I personally would have preferred to go and look because I'm more kinaesthetic. But it works quite well because I did understand the project.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

One school suggested that they hoped to be able to take more pupils to the Gallery in future: visits had hitherto been arranged only for those on Art examination courses from Year 10 to 13. Meanwhile, several teachers stated that they intend to implement some of the ideas from their day at the Gallery into their everyday teaching:

The introductory session I found quite helpful, and in some ways, because it gave me new approaches to teaching English, it was quite inspirational.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Natasha's workshop took me right out of my comfort zone but was really good fun. I will be using some of the activities with my mentor group as well as our pilot group.
Teacher, Hillview

The impact which the Gallery visit had upon the pupils was also apparent:

They've had that experience and I think that does make them really think differently about the project.
Teacher, Hillview

I have feedback forms [from the pupils] from the trip. Just flicking through, every one of them thought it was either excellent or very good.
Teacher, Central Foundation

And going to the National Gallery it was just amazing because we saw pictures, and the whole time we spent at least an hour or half an hour on one picture and we'd just described the emotions inside, what's going on, what's happening.
Pupil, Central Foundation

I was a bit worried at first because they're quite a lively class, that would be the best way to describe them and I didn't know how they were going to react to be being in such a grand gallery and actually just being sat there… But actually they were fantastic, they were really good, they came up with some really good answers, some really good observations.
Teacher, Parkview

[Viyki] took on board every single comment that was made by the boys so they felt really valued and they weren't afraid to say what they thought, they learned so much about art, they were really enthused by it, and so was I.
Teacher, Central Foundation

I'm going hopefully in the holidays coming up.
Pupil, Langdon

Areas for improvement were also suggested by one teacher:

But it was quite long, I felt it was a little bit dry… They did enjoy it, it maybe just needed breaking up with something a bit more lightweight perhaps… I got a bit worn out with it and I sensed that some of them were as well. But they would never say that, and they were positive to the end.
Teacher, Langdon

One teacher suggested that the Gallery visit and indeed the project itself provided an

unprecedented opportunity for many of the pupils:

A lot of our students actually don't have the opportunity elsewhere to visit art galleries or to discuss these topics and so in that aspect it's invaluable really, because they wouldn't have this any other time, so if they don't have that encouraged at home then once they leave home or they leave school they may never know about this. So in terms of life skills and life knowledge I think it's a lot bigger than just doing a project in art and English and drama, a lot bigger.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Teachers described how the prestige of the project being led by the National Gallery and their schools' selection for the pilot had real weight when they needed time and resources to implement it and the novelty prompted increased enthusiasm.

It's a national pilot: if it was something within the school it wouldn't have as much importance I guess.
Teacher, Langdon

I think because it's all new it's quite stimulating to be looking at new ideas, challenging yourself. I'm thinking I've got those lessons on Wednesday, what am I going to do, how's it going to develop. Whereas we tend to have the same schemes of work running year on year and its' quite hard to get enthused about them after running them so many times, so something like this is really inspiring, I'm really enjoying it.
Teacher, Central Foundation

It's the time constraints, trying to meet with people, and it doesn't always work, but here we've actually been able to set aside the time, and say it's *Picture in Focus*, we've got a meeting.
Teacher, Langdon

When you go to school and you go to do these things and you want to do it and you've been told these are really good ideas and it doesn't happen, you don't get the school support on it, you don't find the subjects are willing and able and it's one of those make believe ideals that you've thought is really beneficial to the pupils but will never happen… Buy by having the National Gallery, having what they've offered us in order to do it has meant we were able to do it.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

The novelty and prestige of the project clearly had a positive impact. The extent to which this could be sustained were schools to repeat the project and once involved schools are not just those selected for the pilot should be considered.

Pupils and a teacher at Ibstock Place described the motivation they felt through being part of the pilot project.

Because she said to us that it was going to the National Gallery so we had to put a lot of effort into it at the weekend we carried on, so we got the draft version, normally when we have an essay we just get the essay for two or three days.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

We feel like we have to work harder because in a way it's pressure on us because it's like us that's doing it, only ten schools, so we feel like we have to put everything into it and we come out with a lot better work.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

I think they feel really excited to be part of the project, they know they're the only class doing it and that it's a special pilot scheme as it were.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Social impact on pupils

There were benefits to the aforementioned challenge of different pupils attending different lessons due to setting and other grouping. One teacher noted that:

Three out of the drama class might have been in [teacher]'s English class, but the rest of them haven't, so they're all going 'tell me', and they're learning from each other because they haven't been there. So I think in that way it's encouraged a really nice social dynamic within the group as well.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Another teacher commented that the way pupils who had been to the Gallery shared their experiences with their peers was beneficial to both groups.

It creates new dynamics within the classroom, once the students have been to the gallery and then shared that experience and then work with that experience in developing something creative.
Teacher, Hillview

This development in social dynamic was also described in another school:

We've done quite a bit of group work, they've been working with each other in different groupings and I think that's been very good for them, and I think they've been doing that in other classes as well. So I would say that it has benefited their social groupings.
Teacher, Langdon

This was supported by one of the pupils:

We had to work in groups who we wouldn't usually, it took us out of our comfort zone and put us into new groups. I wouldn't say it bonded us, but we can talk to different people throughout the class.
Pupil, Langdon

These impacts were not just in relation to pupil grouping. The teachers quoted below felt that there were wider social impacts too:

I think that for us, it will be more about their morale and the social and the cultural things, I think they will be able to see that there is relevance to them for paintings and what paintings can do in general.
Teacher, Hillview

From my experience we're doing a lot more teamworking with the students in this project, because they've had to organise themselves into groups, they've had to take on different roles and we're just starting to look at different ways of how they share those roles out, whether they rotate the roles… So there's a lot more teamwork going on, which is quite good.
Teacher, Hillview

The opportunities for collaborative work were an important part of the social impact. Pupils worked collaboratively to produce group outcomes in a wide range of curricular areas.

We choreographed the dance, our whole class together
Pupil, Ibstock Place

We get to write our own plays on the story of Diana and Actaeon and act them out in groups of four.
Pupil, Ibstock Place

Pupils at Central Foundation created a book of creative writing, bound such that different sections written by different pupils could be flapped back and forth and thus read in any order.

When we were looking at her senses and what she smells, hears and everything, we're going to have to write that down and then type it and then as we stick them together we'll actually make a different scene altogether. Because everyone's thinking of different things no matter what, all put together they make sense.
Pupil, Central Foundation

They'll be recording whatever goes on around them, using a camera as a tool. Then they'll bring it into Moviemaker, they'll edit it, they'll take out the bits they want. So it won't actually be them doing it as an individual thing so they're doing it themselves, it's a class thing.
Teacher, Langdon

Changing Teachers' Practice

Several teachers found that the project had affected the way in which they planned.

... we made our subject the last cog. So we looked to

see what they [other involved teachers] were doing and then developed the scheme for art around them, which was really interesting and a really nice way of not approaching it how I would do normally.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

It's going back to those days when you're doing teacher training and you're writing a scheme of work for yourself, for the students that you know, and with a particular focus to go back to.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Others described ways in which their teaching during the project was different from their usual approach.

I've become much more aware of what they're capable of and giving them a bit more responsibility or ownership over what they want to do and allowing them to be much much more creative. Although there is a fine line of just letting them go crazy, and I think it's finding that balance and this has helped a lot I think.
Teacher, Parkview

The *style* of my teaching hasn't really changed, but it's given me the ideas... for example, that you can use paintings as a metaphor. Having the painting to focus on, bringing the cohesion to that particular unit of work.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

I think this project has made me 100% more positive, since I've been doing it I've really enjoyed teaching it because I've got ownership of it and I'm choosing to do things that I find interesting.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Teachers also outlined ways in which they felt they could use elements of these different approaches to planning in teaching in the future.

I've never used art as a stimulus for geography before and actually had wanted to use something like art, music, drama or dance or something like that for a stimulus for Geography to add to the creativity, so it's been really good to be able to use it and it was quite far away from what I thought I would be using as an art stimulus and actually now I think I would be able to take that and use it, not just for Year Eight but also maybe Key Stage Four and Key Stage Five.
Teacher, Hillview

In the short term I'll use the fact that the enthusiasm has increased to inform how I do my planning and maybe I'll choose different activities, but realistically there's limits to it, again because of the constraints of the timetable and the schemes of work that we've got.
Teacher, Hillview

One teacher suggested that she would be able to bring ideas from the project to her new school the following academic year.

I'm not going to be here, but it will affect me at the new place I'm going to I think, because I'll be a bit more open, I think it'll make me think what I want to be teaching and how I'm going to approach it.
Teacher, Parkview

Possibilities for the Future

Teachers discussed a sense of momentum and ways in which they felt the project could be developed and extended to include further departments within their school, or more teachers within their department:

I think this project has been really successful because it's now moved into three subject areas, so it feels like we're slowly getting the word out that actually cross-curricular is working, it's effective and the kids really enjoy it.
Teacher, Central Foundation

So a way of thinking about how we could actually do it, when they can go to different teachers and really see that link, almost like project-based working. They don't tend to do it, they do a lot at primary school and then at secondary school they just stop. So that would be a really nice thing to explore, maybe get some other subjects involved as well, I think that would be really beneficial. I think it went well for the initial start, but I think it's brought up ideas that we could continue with.
Teacher, Parkview

... you start thinking about how this could expand and how it could work, and I think using a common thread to hang your ideas on is quite revolutionary in a way.
Teacher, Central Foundation

I think it is feasible because I guess it needed to start like this so you could get a scheme of work together, you could see what works, what doesn't, where you are going with it. Then it would just have to be delivered to departments, so instead of just myself doing these lessons, the whole of the English department would teach this, so it's just about passing on good practice.
Teacher, Central Foundation

Incorporation of the project into lesson plans and schemes of work was seen as a key way of ensuring its place in the school for the future.

I would say that I have made sure that I've written it up as a scheme of work which is going to be accessible for somebody else who's never taught it, so the way I've written the lessons is so that somebody could just pick it up and teach it if they wanted to.
Teacher, Central Foundation

I think it takes time for it to sink in and really think about it. And then of course you're kind of slightly tied down with the current schemes of work that we have to be doing, so it would take time to filter through, but

I think taking ideas to start next year, I think that's definitely when it will start to impact.
Teacher, Parkview

I think we would like to incorporate this into our standard schemes of work, so we will be doing something similar again in the future.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

Several teachers suggested that experiencing the project had prompted a new willingness to take a more flexible approach to planning and to cross-curricular work.

It's changed us into thinking that we could tie it in.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

But actually then to think about how we can involve technology, ICT, English and the dance as well, how we can involve all that together, has been really interesting. I think that will be something that we will try and continue to do, rather than us just working with Art because they're next door to us.
Teacher, Langdon

Teachers had ideas about how they might develop the project in the future, drawing upon their experiences of the pilot and using the momentum they felt that they had achieved.

We haven't actually had any joint teaching. I think that's something that if we were to do it again would be a really good idea.
Teacher, Ibstock Place

As an NQT I'm very open to try everything new, this might have flopped, but it's how we as a school approached it, we sat down and said 'What do we want to get out of it?' I think what we've come up with has really started to put the wheels in motion, so I'd definitely like to carry this on.
Teacher, Langdon

Whilst teachers at Hillview felt that extending the project to a whole year group would not work in the format they had adopted for the pilot, they had discussed how they would like to take steps to organise some form of whole-year participation including work off-timetable, team-teaching, working in larger blocks of time than standard lesson lengths and including parents in a form of community engagement.

It was acknowledged by several teachers that the nature of school organisation means that practicality can supersede aspiration.

I think that's the key thing isn't it, I think with projects like this it's great because you can say let's suspend the timetable, let's do this, let's do that, and make it all happen and it'll be wonderful, but the reality then to make that happen again and again is not so feasible.
Teacher, Langdon

Discussion and Conclusions

This research evaluation found that *Picture in Focus* has great potential for secondary schools, and for that reason we would strongly encourage its extension to a wider sample of schools.

It must be noted that in contrast to the research evaluation of the *Take One Picture* primary level work, this evaluation is of a project in its earliest stages of development. The extremely high levels of motivation voiced by participants in our research evaluation of *Take One Picture* were in part a result of the well-established nature of that initiative. It was therefore quite natural to find a more complex situation in relation to the *Picture in Focus* pilot project that is the subject of this report.

The headline findings were as follows:

- Teachers felt that the project had resulted in new ways of working which promoted freedom in pupils' thinking and the use of skills across subjects.
- The great majority of pupils and their teachers reported sustained interest throughout the project.
- The single focus of the painting inspired creativity.
- The project inspired a more flexible and integrated approach to the curriculum.
- Teachers identified benefits for cross-departmental work, particularly in relation to increased knowledge of one another's teaching and the opportunities to share and discuss ideas.
- Teachers discussed a sense of momentum and ways in which they felt the project could be developed and extended to include further departments within their school.

There was ample evidence from the data of perceptions that learning had been significantly enriched by the project. The depth of learning reported when different subjects were combined around a a common stimulus to provide a holistic perspective was noted by both teachers and their pupils. Teachers used the painting in the teaching of Art, Drama, DT, English, Geography, ICT, Music, PE and Science. Links to History were also identified in terms of slavery and colonialism, and a pupil from Hillview suggested that the painting was relevant to RE due to the issues of morality the painting exposes. The painting was therefore used in nine different subjects amongst these schools, and two further potential subjects were

identified. There was evidence that the use of contemporary contexts as part of the teaching resulted in greater engagement with the subject matter by pupils.

Both pupils and teachers seemed to value the departure from their 'usual' style of work. Teacher use of the painting itself varied. Some teachers worked as much from the story and characters as from the painting itself, though the majority also used the visual aspects of the picture to inspire teaching and learning in a variety of ways, including to inspire movement and tableaux in dance and as a metaphor in English to promote imaginative, 'coloured' 'language.

The project elicited several different types of cross-curricular work through: a) common content inspired by the painting; b) using approaches normally associated with one subject area in another subject area; c) uniting subjects through collaboration around an end product. The first kind of cross curricular work involved use of the common stimulus (the painting) resulting in the different subject curricula became linked by virtue of the commonality of content. In other cases, cross-curricularity emerged through the use of activities more commonly carried out in other subjects within lessons, such as the drawing of a map in English or the use of paints in science, resulting in the use of skills not commonly associated with a subject, but which were instead transferred from others, with an intention of increasing interest and enhancing learning. The third type of cross-curricular work came in the form of combined outcomes, in which work carried out in distinct subject lessons came together to form an end product, requiring an ongoing awareness of the role of other subjects in the process, as well as a shared focus on the product. Teachers at Hillview reported that they had run the project such that to some extent, each lesson ran on to the next, regardless of subject. This meant that for example an English lesson had to reach a certain point and cover a certain subject before the pupils' next science lesson. This was in part to ensure that pupils reached the same level of understanding, regardless of whether they had been to the gallery, and partly due to inter-departmental sequential lesson planning.

The visit to the Gallery was an important part of the project. Further to the provision of gallery visits to the pupils involved, the project seems to have increased the likelihood of young people making future visits to the gallery. One teacher suggested that her school was now more likely

to consider visits for groups other than the Year 10-13 exam classes who had traditional been the only groups to visit. One of the pupils mentioned that they were hoping to go back to the Gallery in the school holidays, though none were directly asked about this, so there may also be others.

The project necessitated changes to teachers' normal practice, particularly in terms of planning, and some teachers indicated that it would prompt more permanent changes in terms of attitudes to planning and to inter-departmental collaboration, as well as in the use of a greater variety of stimuli. It was however suggested that the special case of the pilot project and the direct support of the National Gallery were key factors in teachers securing the time and managerial support they needed and in order to maintain the impetus for the project.

Teachers had a range of ideas related to how they felt future projects could work. The sense of momentum brought about by the pilot was such that teachers were already considering future possibilities and the changes they would make to their approaches following their first attempt. A more flexible timetable was seen as a key means of carrying out the project successfully, though not all teachers were confident that the degree of flexibility they desired was possible and it was thus believed that compromises would have to be accepted. Several schools felt some form of off-timetable activity, be this a longer period or several shorter ones, would make the project more straightforward, eliminating some of the hurdles they had to overcome in terms of planning.

A key area for consideration is the effect which aims have on the project, on a large scale in terms of the project itself, and on a smaller one, in relation to the planning of individual lessons. The project's aims were not fixed over the course of the project, though the impact of this is not clear. The issue of aims is also relevant to the teaching associated with the project. On one hand, a lesson and scheme of work need to be well-planned, particularly when innovative practice is occurring in terms of structure and timetabling. On the other, for a creative project to flourish, pupils need to take some degree of ownership – something which careful lesson structure with firmly planned content can hinder. There is therefore some tension here and a real challenge to plan for pupil-led activity, without a loss of coverage of essential curriculum content. Teachers found that at times they either had to cover certain things for their colleagues' lessons to make sense to the pupils, or ensure that they did not themselves cover or allow pupils to stray into content which a colleague was later going to teach. This issue does not of course arise in the same way in standard secondary school teaching, in which a single teacher or department has strong organisational control over content, and each group of pupils will have previously learned the same things.

Addressing the following points is likely to enhance chances of success in future work:

a co-constructed vision of what is to be achieved that may or may not feature an explicit and stable statement of aims
an agreed operational definition of creativity
increased time before starting the project to allow teachers to adapt or re-write their schemes of work,
support from senior management and heads of department to allow time for planning,
as much flexibility in timetabling as possible,
a Gallery visit,
opportunities for collaborative outcomes
the linking of the painting to contemporary themes in conjunction with attention to its original context.

This research evaluation has indicated that the *Picture in Focus* project is a very promising approach for secondary schools. We would recommend that the findings of this evaluation are explicitly addressed as part of modifications in preparation for future work and that future work is subject to a continuation of the evaluation in order to provide a longitudinal dimension. The schools involved have encountered challenges and identified the inherent difficulties posed by the nature of secondary schools and their timetabling in relation to carrying out cross-curricular activity, and developed means of overcoming some of these. The pilot shows that the model for the nature of cross-curricular work is therefore likely to develop over time, and is likely to be highly particular to individual schools. Teachers indicated that they felt they had learned from the pilot in terms of how (and how not) to realise a project of this nature. The extent to which teachers felt able to incorporate the project, and the degree of success to which they did so, depended upon their willingness or ability to adapt plans which had already been written. Being able to plan for the project further in advance would be likely to allow for a greater degree of embedding within schemes of work.

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