moving stories

Learning through Dance & Drama

Final Evaluation Report

September 2025

Peoplescape theatre

TRINITY LABAN

/LEAN
Lewisham Education
Arts Network

phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation

Contents

Project Summary

'Moving Stories' is an ambitious, large-scale project that integrates dance and drama to support communication, creativity, and personal agency among children with diverse and complex needs across six special schools. Combining innovative research with a dynamic model of continuing professional development, the project has been fully embraced by teachers and artists, demonstrating clear positive impact on pupil engagement, expression, and confidence—particularly for those involved over two academic years.

The creative approach encourages both verbal and non-verbal expression, imaginative participation, and self-directed learning. Its flexible structure allows for either integrated or distinct use of dance and drama, supporting personalised learning pathways. Teachers report an expanded pedagogical toolkit and growing confidence, particularly in leading drama. Most teachers had some previous experience of drama whereas leading dance was less familiar. Teaching Assistants also became more actively involved, contributing to stronger team cohesion and shared leadership in creative learning.

Professional development was led by artists through a varied and responsive approach—modelling, mentoring, co-experimenting, and direct training—enabling teachers to adapt practices to their own styles and curricula. While some partners would have welcomed more off-site training and inter-school visits, the collaborative process strengthened professional networks. The involvement of a disabled artist as a critical friend was valuable, with interest expressed in deeper inclusion.

Despite logistical complexities, Moving Stories has created a strong legacy—enhanced pupil outcomes, enriched teaching practice, new resources, and a growing professional community. It offers a compelling model for embedding the arts in special education and calls for further dissemination and development.

Introduction

Introduction to the Moving Stories Project

Moving Stories is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and was developed as part of their 'Teacher Development' initiative. Lewisham Education Arts Network, Trinity Laban, and Peoplescape Theatre worked in partnership to manage and deliver the project. The programme employed 8 dance and drama artists to work with 12 teachers from six special schools and special education settings catering to children with autism, social, emotional and mental health needs, speech and language difficulties, and more severe learning challenges. The project sought to explore how dance and drama can be used together in a special needs classroom to enhance children's learning and expand teachers' repertoire of creative approaches. Sessions were initially delivered in triads (a dance artist, a drama artist and one teacher) with support from learning assistants. Over the two years the format evolved from co-led to more teacher-led sessions to foster independence. (For a full list of schools and settings see Appendix 1)

Introduction to the Teacher Development Features of Moving Stories

The Moving Stories Project has been fuelled by high levels of professional expertise and motivation from both artists and teachers and designed to be creative, collaborative and reflective. Project resources were used to prioritise regular planning and reflection time, and off-site training for both teachers and artists. Partners were generous in bringing to the table approaches that had worked in the past and these were trialled and tested in the classroom alongside new thinking born of the alchemy of the triads working together for the first time.

Engaging with *'a concentrated set of sessions with built in reflection time'* (Teacher, Year 1) helped teachers to understand, manipulate and practice new techniques in a safe and supportive environment. Year 1 could be described as the more 'exploratory' year in which dance and drama techniques were employed both separately and in an integrated way to meet children's specific learning needs and teachers and artists together trialed and tested approaches to find out what was most effective. Year 2 was designed to be a year which was more about consolidation and embedding techniques in the teacher's pedagogical toolkit. The artist's role therefore consciously shifted focus between Year 1 and two.

There were benefits to working in special school settings: flexible classrooms; small class sizes; teachers' openness to try new things and repeat them to try and grow children's level of engagement and understanding; the importance of personalising learning; enhanced staffing. There were also challenges born of the project needing to adjust to the inevitable changes brought by spanning two academic years.

Everyone valued the opportunities built into the project's structure to share their practice with each other away from school. It was also enlightening when teachers were invited to lead their own in school training session for colleagues about Moving Stories approaches. All have continued to plan these approaches into their day-to-day work now the project is over.

Introduction to the Moving Stories Approach

Generally lasting between half an hour and forty-five minutes, Moving Story sessions are creative and inter-active with a strong and predictable structure and shape and very clear beginnings and endings. Sessions are dance and drama led, with activity transitioning from one art form to another following a theme. Adults and children, working together, frequently explore a problem to solve, experience a 'journey' and/or create an unfamiliar world to explore. Sessions are frequently supported by weighted sensory props, fabric and other bespoke stimuli.

Often lesson content is linked to a humanities subject, or a text being studied in Literacy. Ritual greetings and routines that encourage children to use their voices are valued, as is the use of a focused calming activity early in the session, maybe accompanied by music or chimes. Where a session begins and ends remains flex-ible and can be altered in the light of how the children are responding on any one day. Sessions also require a calm and reflective 'cool down' activity at their close, frequently using music and touch.

Repetition of session content from week to week, with creative developments that deepen learning, is effec-tive and valued highly. Revisiting this familiar material gives the pupils the security of predicting what's going to happen next while also building the anticipation and excitement of a possible surprise.

A couple of schools appreciated there being a product/sharing goal as the culmination of a series of sessions, with something to rehearse which builds from week to week, and optional research elements fulfilled by an off-site visit.

It is important to note that there are many variables that affect session content: children's capacities, learning needs and behaviour; the culture and planned curriculum of the school; both artists' previous professional practice and experience; the interest skills and confidence of the teacher; the creativity of the process. Some artists worked in more than one school which encouraged cross-fertilization of ideas. Two of the six schools are disapplied from the National Curriculum.

The model which evolved over Year 1 of the project is a more integrated model than was envisaged at the project's inception. Year 2 of the project allowed for more diversification of approach and more work in individual art forms.

Introduction to this report

This report is designed to illustrate the impact of the Moving Stories dance and drama project on the teach-ers, arts practitioners, pupils and initiating partners who have been deeply involved in its evolution.

After illustrating the creative approaches explored and describing the change participants hoped to achieve through their use in the classroom – the report goes on to dive deeper into the detail of the outputs and outcomes achieved and identify the mission critical factors that led to the project's success as a Teacher Development programme. The analysis is structured in line with the desired outcomes outlined in Appendix 2. There were inevitably challenges experienced and in this report these challenges are unpacked to inform future work in this field.

Compiled by analysis of evidence gathered between 2023 and 2025, this is the final impact report. An exec-utive summary of an interim report produced in early Autumn 2024 can be found as Appendix 3.

Evaluation Methodology

What was the change we wanted to see?

The make-up of the Moving Stories Steering group was a strength of the project. It included the three-commissioning partners and two project managers, a member of SLT of a participating school and administrative support. Two of the group were also operating as project artists. This group, working with an external evaluator, met in January 2024 to finalise an 'Enquiry Question.'

'How can using drama and dance in SEND settings develop teachers' pedagogical practice and support the strategic embedding of this practice in whole school planning?'

This group also defined their 'story of change' in a set of specific programme outcomes (see Appendix 2)

Programme outcomes in summary

- Project teachers will have developed a secure repertoire of effective dance and drama techniques and strategies that they are excited to embed in their work in SEND settings
- Creatively engaged, pupils will have grown in confidence while developing their verbal and non-verbal communication and expressive skills.
- Participating artists will have deepened and extended their professional practice through working with more than one art form and collaborating with specialist teachers in SEND settings
- The most effective training approaches that helped realize these aspirations will have been identified.

As the project evolved the external evaluator met regularly with the project steering group to tease out their thinking, analyse progress towards project outcomes and identify any 'bumps on the road' that needed further exploration. All members of the group and the evaluator had access to sessions in school. Entry point, mid-point and end point surveys of all participants and individual interviews with project partners were conducted. One of the project managers, also a qualified speech therapist, conducted post session pupil 'interviews' using a technique called 'talking mats'. This technique was also taught to teaching assistants who expressed an interest.

Points of live, interactive and formative reflection during the cohort learning day at the end of Year 1 and Year 2 were a vital part of the evaluation. Here artists and teachers were supported to reflect in detail on the story so far, identifying the needs participants shared and further opportunities sought. Processes involved included brainstorming; drawing; prioritising; provocations to help synthesise and distil thinking; focus group conversations. Findings were written up and shared. Private one-to-one interviews to camera were reviewed. The final cohort day encouraged the consideration of unexpected outcomes, the project's legacy and next steps.

Sources of evidence secured by the evaluator 2023 to 2025

- 24 structured observations of Moving Stories sessions in action (February 2024 to June 2025 - Observations included participating in reflective conversations and watching live sessions)
- Attendance at three internal school staff training sessions about Moving Stories practice
- Review of records of planning and reflection conversations between teachers and artists
- Review of children's feedback through 'Talking Mats'
- Informal conversations and feedback from steering group and artists' mentor
- Analysis of baseline, mid-point and end point surveys
- Notes from structured conversations between SLT and teachers from partner schools
- Notes from interviews with senior leaders Summer 2025
- Evidence gathered from live focus group sessions at a 'Cohort Learning Day' on 17th July 2024 and a half day on 15th July 2025
- Interviews with project partners and project managers
- Observation and transcription of filmed interviews

Outputs

No. of pupils reached	206 across two years
No. of participating teachers	13 teachers across two years (2 completing one year each)
No. of participating artists	8
Offsite training & evaluation hours – Artists or Teachers as separate groups	24
Offsite training & evaluation hours – Artists and Teachers together	15
No. of sessions where Artists were mentored by a disabled artist	3
No. of Moving Stories Sessions in school – including planning and reflection time	216
No. of children's reflection sessions using 'Talking Mats'	22
No. of In-school training sessions led by project participants	6
Resource pack arising from Moving Stories practice (hard copy and online)	1

In addition to the above inventory all teachers experimented using dance and drama pedagogy on their own, with the help of their learning support team.

Outcomes for Teachers

An Overview of the Impact Moving Stories has had on Professional Practice

When teachers were invited to endorse statements about the impact of the project on their professional practice there was a high level of consensus, suggesting broad levels of satisfaction:

- All who completed the end-point questionnaire agreed or strongly agreed that their personal confidence to lead drama and dance activities had grown and acknowledged a broadening of their store of teaching approaches.
- Most of the project teachers feel comfortable leading a 'Moving Stories' session without an artist.
- 10 of the 12 have shared Moving Stories approaches with colleagues.
- All agreed or strongly agreed that Moving Stories has broadened their expectations of what their pupils can achieve and believe that pupils make progress towards their learning goals.
- All plan to integrate Moving Story approaches into next year's planning – 2025 to 2026.

Figure 1: Teacher End-point Survey: A Quick Overview
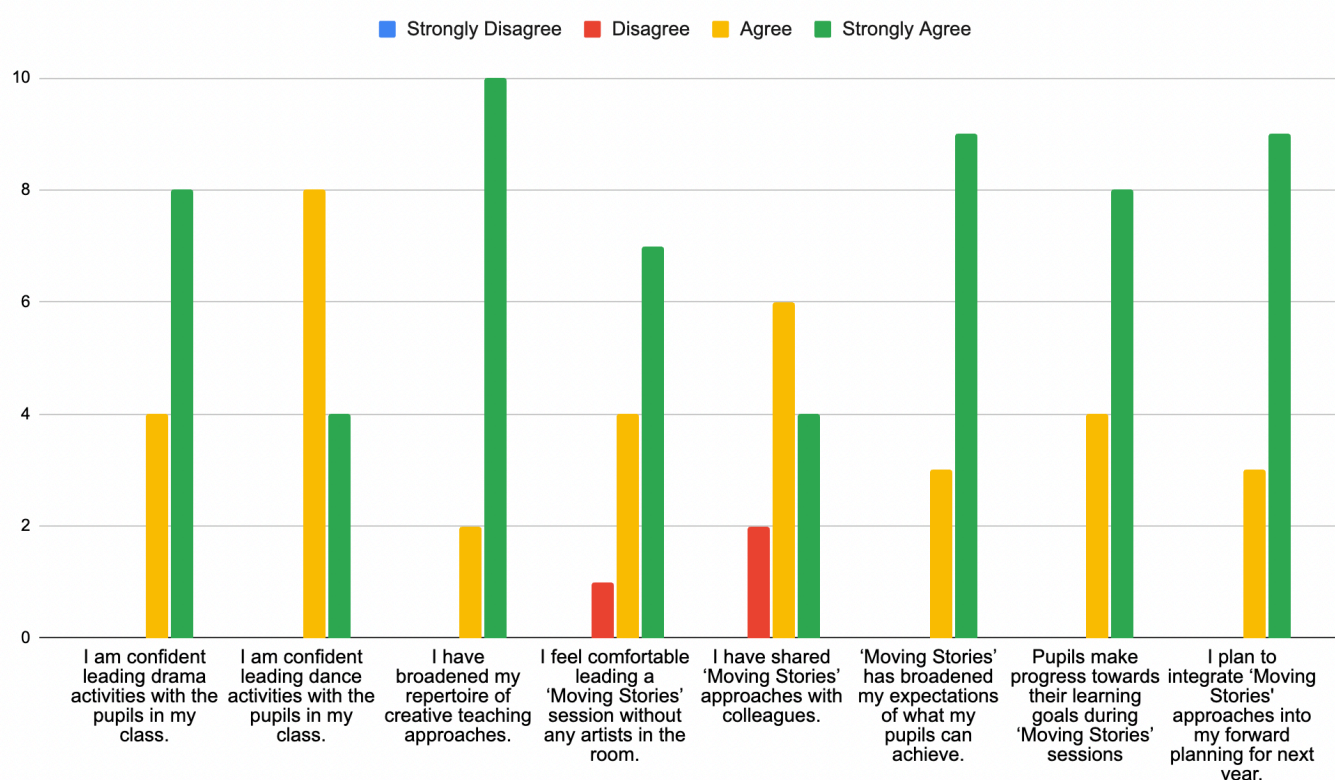
Eight of the teachers added significant detail to this overview. One teacher speaks for many when she writes

> *'It has been incredibly useful for me as a teacher to develop my skills and I feel ready and confident to continue the journey without artists although I would love for them to come back. It was amazing working with them and learning from them. The pupils have gained a lot from the sessions – confidence and creativity'*

While Moving Stories in one school 'is now part of our curriculum topic planners and will have its own space to continue' and in another *'It has become part of our holistic curriculum and what we offer to children...'* teachers recognise that *'it is hard to do Moving Stories with just one teacher and an LSA.'* The use of the individual elements of Moving Stories however is universally viewed as very effective:

> *'I regularly use elements of Moving Stories sessions without there being artists in the room, for example in PE/dance/Chinese New Year etc but don't explicitly call it Moving Stories.'*

Desired Outcome: Teachers can identify which drama and dance approaches are most effective at building SEND pupils' expressive, verbal and non-verbal communication skills

Teachers have particularly valued the following elements of Moving Stories practice:

The way 'Moving Stories' sessions are structured

- Moving Stories has a strong, predictable structure and identity.
- Ritual greetings and opening routines encourage children to use their voices, sometimes with the additional use of a focusing and calming activity, maybe accompanied by music or chimes.
- Where a session begins and ends remains flexible and can be altered in the light of how the children are responding on any one day.
- Sessions require a calm and reflective 'cool down' activity at their close, frequently using music and touch.
- Repetition of session content from week to week, with creative developments that deepen learning, is also valued highly.
- The inclusion of a rehearsed outcome that can be shared with other children/parents building in complexity from week to week was also valued by a small number of teachers.

Specific Drama elements of Moving Stories

- Teacher in Role technique working with pupils who are also in role
- The introduction of a story narrative or simple theme which can include some dramatic tension by requiring a problem to be solved or a quest to be undertaken
- The use of recorded music and live instruments to assist with focus and transitions
- The use of 'signifying' items to indicate when the leader is in role or not
- The strategic use of simple, tailored and weighted props/symbolic objects and scene-setting textiles which are tangible, sensory and frame the working space offer multi-sensory ways into the imagined experiences.

Specific Drama elements of Moving Stories (cont'd)

- Drama's 'gaming' techniques which helped to manage the energies in the room and can be tailored to themes being explored and skills needing development
- Verbal 'Call and Response' activity with repeating patterns.
- The use of story massage

Specific Dance elements of Moving Stories

- The use of dance language around dynamics, levels, space and time.
- Collective movement of their teaching group, moving together 'as one'
- Collaboration through pair and small groups helping children manage proximity and touch.
- Responding physically to recorded musical stimuli and the use of live instruments to assist with focus and transitions
- Movement's value in helping pupils regulate their behaviour, by breaking up conventional, more sedentary learning
- Autonomous, strategic use of flexible props like circles made of elastic, which can be personalised for one-to-one work with children whose movement is restricted.
- Encouraging children to use space and their bodies to express themselves.
- Physical 'Call and Response' activity with repeating patterns.
- Use of textile props like long ribbons, expanse of stretchy fabric or scarves to stimulate the imaginations and encourage a particular type of movement; help define a working area; improve balance and proprioception.
- Movement provides an alternative way of responding for non-verbal children allowing increased participation

Desired Outcome: Teachers can understand and practice these techniques with artists' support

The level of artist support (12 sessions x 2 artists) was enhanced in Year 1, to allow for skill sharing between teachers and artists, and time to explore the most effective way to meet children's needs across diverse special ed settings. This intense creative period was highly valued. All participants agree that the most in-spiring part of the project has been working with two artists in the classroom because of the excitement and learning potential this created, and they could have handled more:

'having both artists present created a magical atmosphere full of enthusiasm and creativity...'

It was always intended that in Year 2 teachers be encouraged to develop and deliver sessions more inde-pendently, disseminating their learning to colleagues and embedding the practice within the school. With artist contact time changing from twelve sessions each to six, each school created their own contact pattern on site, negotiating a balance between some sessions with one artist and some with two. Bespoke to each school, the timing of on-site programmes were affected by teachers wanting to get to know their groups before the sessions started, artist availability and teacher maternity leave. In some instances this produced a big gap between the last session of Year 1 and the first session of Year 2, and broke up the continuity of artist attendance.

'It was quite stop/start this year. Because the pupils and LSAs hadn't been in our classes last year, they were never fully trained up in the Moving Stories way...'

'New groups of children needed more artists' time.'

'I wish we structured the sessions in a way that meant there wasn't a huge gap between seeing each artist and do one week each. This would have improved the flow of lessons.'

Artists were encouraged to alter their partnership approach from co-creator to mentor. This meant that in some instances artists were working on session planning away from the classroom, and on other occasions diving more deeply into their specialist art form at the teacher's request where the teacher was less confi-dent, or delivering one part of the Moving Stories sessions while relying on the teacher to lead with the sec-ond art form. Although keen to have as much artist time as possible, generally teachers responded positively to this change:

'It felt right! The first year was about us learning skills and getting to know the artists but also about the artists learning about our setting and the children and us. I think we were perfectly ready to be more independent and have a pop at taking on a more leading role.'

'The new structure was beneficial and a vital part of my personal progress. It meant that I had more skill specific, detailed evaluation and feedback with each artist individually. The move into leading independently allowed me to develop my own style, independent of the artists.'

'It gave more emphasis on one element of the programme while encouraging the teacher to assume responsi-bility for the running of the other element'

'It felt scary at first...but it did get easier...I think it did propel me to have more confidence to do more...'

Notes recorded by each triad in Year 2 illustrates quite sophisticated analysis of what went well and what could be improved, suggesting that teachers were both comfortable and competent when it comes to refining their practice in the light of experience – for example:

'our challenge is to make it accessible for the learners who need more processing support and engaging for the ones who want a challenge and already have a deep understanding of the story...'

'Children engage with activity in their own space. We don't always have to be brought back into the circle. We can take the activity to them...'

'T opted out during the ball activity again – trying to do skills that were too complicated. I need to disconnect what he can do physically from what he wants to do...'

One teacher reflected a shift in her perspective as to what success is – in Moving Stories 'Every idea is accepted...'

At the end of the programme teachers were quick to talk about the rediscovery of *'joy and fun in the classroom'* - that the project had reignited past interests and that they found it both *'relaxed and empowering'* It was efficient because the amount of preparation was low, but it had a *'huge impact'.*

Desired Outcome: Teachers understand and use these strategies independently with confidence.

Observations show that in Year 2 artists have stepped back, letting teachers take the lead. While the planning of the Moving Stories sessions in Year 2 remained a collaboration between artist and teacher, frequently the teacher would lead a session without the artist the week after a session where they worked together, which was a repetition of some of the content and processes of the week before, with a minor extension and new challenge. It was reassuring to hear teachers bring stories back to the artist of how things had gone when they were working on their own.

While some teachers moved forward with confidence, a few appeared anxious and relied on more familiar practices such as increasing their use of whiteboard screens to help structure sessions - devices used rarely in Year 1. Some, more tentative, teachers felt most comfortable focusing their attention on elaborately prepared sensory props, scaffolding their sessions more through the things they introduced, rather than their own teaching techniques.

Some teachers were increasingly happy to take risks and be ambitious - for example, building in paired and small group work; creating an immersive environment; working with blindfolds...Teachers made imaginative leaps, for example depicting movements on cards as if they were Egyptian hieroglyphics, looking at choreography inspired by Mandala patterns. Slowly individual teachers developed their own personal style, using dance and drama techniques that suited their pedagogical preferences and, in this way, developed stronger ownership.

Teachers recognise the progress they have made:

'I think incorporating dance and drama into the curriculum and planning Moving Stories sessions around our topic has improved my ability to keep the children engaged...'

'I've become better at responding and listening to children...'

' I'm allowing children to take more risks – lead the direction of the sessions'

'Changing my perspectives on success in the sessions and learning to relax a bit more – to go with the flow of where it takes us if different to what I had in my head. I'm very used to having things very structured ...how we can do less structured outcomes in a way that still offers them predictability with balance has been eye opening...'

'Confidence and ability to engage teaching assistants'

More than one teacher commented that relationships in her classroom had deepened since Moving Stories. Some teachers found teaching dance more challenging than teaching drama:

'I will always be less confident with dance than I am with drama. Some of the breakdown in language around movement has been most helpful to me. Teacher in role is something I love but it does not work effectively with my current cohort of children...'

'Movement sessions that might get out of hand and become unsafe simply because there aren't enough adults to support, or situations where turn taking won't work without so many adults to support waiting when it's not your turn yet'

'Dance is difficult due to not having speakers and/or time on the timetable and space in the hall. Also feel pressure from SLT to cover the curriculum with evidence in books and writing...'

'Good to see support staff getting more involved. Some adapted to this more readily. It's been positive for the team, however because all staff could see the joy and progression made by some individuals and this really helps for team wellbeing...

'Support staff have been on their own journey with this. Many have seen the impact and benefit to the children which has allowed them to release some of their inhibitions...'

There has been a shift in the locus of control in some classrooms: *'normally I have to be in charge – now I'm an equal in the team.'* All teachers and artists agree that it would have been valuable to have enabled TAs to access more face-to-face training despite the logistical challenges of having to use school closure or early finish days in order that they be paid for their time.

The role of teaching assistants

The team of supporting adults in special school settings can vary in number and make up from week to week and are sometimes taken to cover elsewhere at short notice. However, they play a vital part in helping children access learning. Across Year One of this project engaging teaching assistants in Moving Stories sessions achieved variable levels of success. When two artists were in the room, the artist not leading would model what 'support' might look like in a creative session which was helpful for TAs and helped them to feel valued. Some TAS did actively and successfully engage in movement and role play.

Exposure to a second year of practice appears to have broken through some of the support staff's cautiousness and self-consciousness:

'Last year we had quite a lot of health issues and maybe less motivation. This year staff were more enthusiastic and involved.'

Desired Outcome: Training approaches that have been most effective at building teachers understanding, confidence and skill are identified.

A list of training approaches was compiled for the end point survey, informed by conversations with artists in the summer of 2024. Teachers were asked to identify and endorse any strategy that had been used in school to enable them to plan and deliver their creative sessions.

Artists' Approach	Numbers of teachers who experienced the approach
Planning sessions together, for delivery independently	12
Encouraging you to adjust your plan in the light of pupil responses	12
Supporting you when problem-solving	12
Joining in while supporting your lead	11
Modelling approaches that you can repeat on your own	10
Focusing on approaches you found hard	9
Encouraging you to lead reflection	9
Observing you working	8
Offering extra training	1

All teachers value highly the off-site training experiences built into the programme, particularly those where practice from project schools are shared and would have appreciated more of these:

'I know artist time is so precious but anything to get more time to share practice, ideas and inspiration would be great as I found this time so helpful'

Teachers also wished they had had the opportunity to visit each other's schools to watch Moving Stories in another special needs setting.

In the 'kick-off' to Year 2 of the project, following feedback from teachers and reflections by artists, more theoretical underpinning of each art form was shared with teachers, responding to requests for back up materials/a handbook and reference documents.

A full colour resource pack (available in hard copy and online) has now been compiled, based on ideas generated and learning gleaned from both years. Designed to be a dissemination tool and a support for further experimentation this was published in July 2025.

'This is a beautiful, useable and teacher friendly resource. Lovely to have something to share with other teachers, support staff and leaders.'

Teachers leading training

The decision to ask each Triad to organise and lead a 'Moving Stories' training session in school (60 to 90 minutes) at some point over the academic Year 24/25 has served not only as a dissemination tool but also has had a diagnostic function – proving to be an excellent way to observe teacher progress in strengthening their understanding of the techniques they have used and the impact they have had. A teacher acknowledged *'doing the CPD session to others in school helped us develop our own practice'*.

Outcomes for pupils

Overview of desired learning outcome for pupils

1. A development of verbal and non-verbal communication skills
2. Increased levels of awareness and engagement
3. A development of confidence to initiate ideas and make creative choices

Interim findings about the impact of 'Moving Stories' sessions on pupils' learning

At the end of Year 1 of the project teachers brainstormed the range of valuable skills they had observed individual pupils develop during Moving Stories sessions:

- Engagement and motivation, willingness to participate fully in creative activities
- Willingness to express how they are feeling using movement and/or voice in a session
- Growth in confidence and self-esteem, and developing a sense of belonging
- Communicating verbally and/or non-verbally
- The ability to generate ideas, reflect and sometimes bring new ideas to a session
- Enjoying the personal control that involvement in movement and drama offer
- Growth in focus, concentration and persistence at tasks
- Willingness to collaborate with peers and adults and handle proximity and touch
- Ability to secure space and lead elements of the dance and drama work
- Ability to regulate their emotions and recognise emotions in each other

Indicators of pupil progress in Year 2

In Year 2, each triad was encouraged to record and track the nature of contributions made by three pupils during each artist attended session. Triads were asked to consider the same pupils each session and place a cross in the cell of a table that is 'best fit' to each pupil's level of involvement on that day, leaving the cells blank if absent. They were encouraged to offer additional detail where contributions were deemed significant for that individual. Records were kept across a three-month period.

Table employed to track the nature of pupils' contributions each session

| Name:	No evidence (0)*	A little evidence (1)	Clear and regular evidence (2)	A significant/ remarkable amount of evidence for this individual (3)
Pupil tries to communicate within the imagined context – verbally or non-verbally				
Pupil shows enhanced awareness/ engagement				
Pupil initiates an idea / ideas				
Pupil makes a creative choice/ choices				

*NB to compile Figure Two each level of evidence noted was attributed a score – see brackets above.

Progress in Moving Stories sessions proved not to be linear but it is visible. The nature of pupils' contributions varies from session to session across the timeframe of the project. Children have good weeks and bad weeks. Many variables affect pupils' involvement and progress with the level of dysregulation of the child and his or her peers, the power of the imaginative 'hook', familiarity and level of support from adults in the room and the time and space available to build engagement being frequently cited.

Some stimuli prove irresistible to individual children, augmenting their involvement and raising their level of contribution e.g. use of puppets; availability of musical instruments; sensory props; opportunities to move and be physical; the atmosphere created by a new imaginative environment.

We have included analysis of tracking data for 31 pupils in this report. Due to some pupils being absent or circumstances preventing Triads from completing judgements for all sessions, we have only included records for pupils who have at least 6 sessions of evaluation data recorded. This is a small number, but the indicators of progress are encouraging (see Figure 2).

## Figure 2: Average outcome levels over time
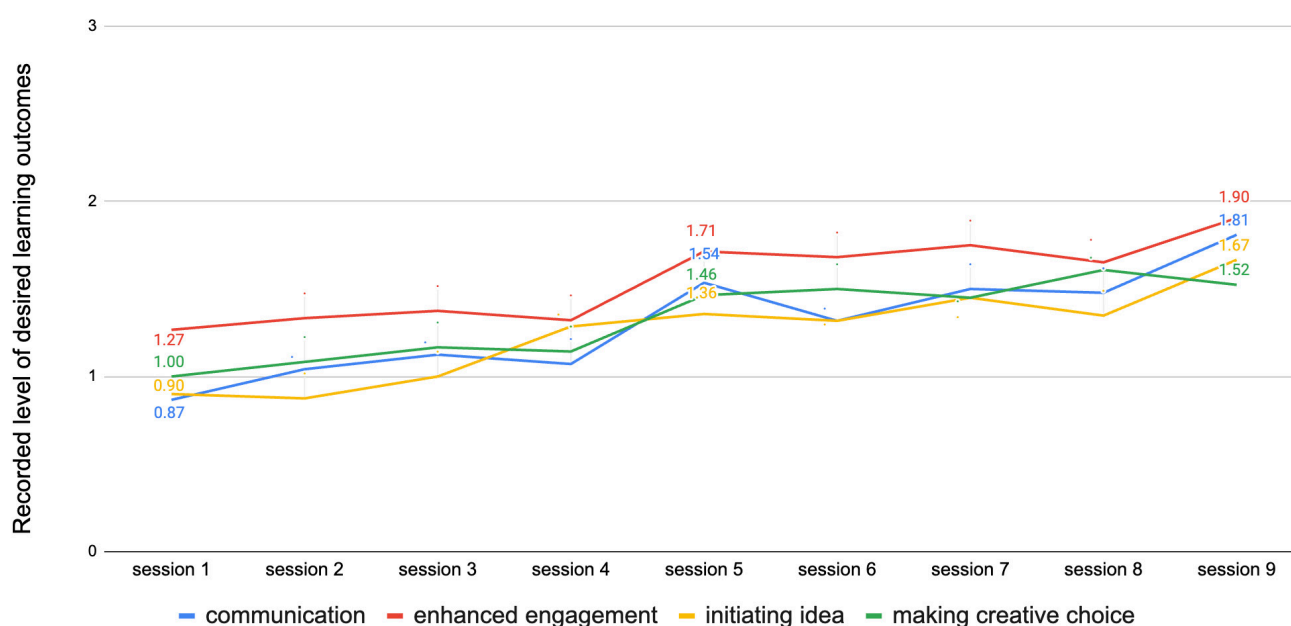
We observed a steady increase in average pupils' contribution levels across all four outcomes. We observed the most significant increase in pupil contribution levels from sessions 4 to 5 across all four areas, perhaps because trust became more established by this stage. Because this graph is based on averages it has 'flattened' the results. There were pupils recorded as making significant and remarkable contributions in at least one session across more than one desired learning outcome. Figure 3[iii] suggests that 'initiating ideas' was an area where pupils' responses had significant breadth.

Figures 3 [i-iv]: Score Increases over time across the four skills areas

In this section, the pie charts display the frequency of pupils' widest score increases across the four skill areas over the period records were kept. For example, if a pupil was evaluated as showing no evidence [0] in the initial sessions and later received a score of clear evidence [2], that pupil will be recorded with a +2 score increase. (Note: the % stated in the description are the sum of the +1 and +2 score increases.)

[i] Percentage in Scores Improvement for Pupils Using Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication in Creative Scenarios

- 41.9%
- 45.2%
- 6.5%
- 6.5%

+1 score   +2 score   +3 score   0 score
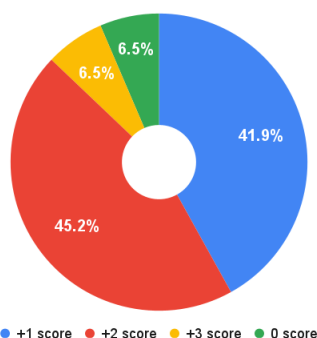
[i] Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication:

87% of pupils showed at least a **1-2 level increase** in terms of showing evidence in Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication, moving from little or no evidence to clear and significant evidence.
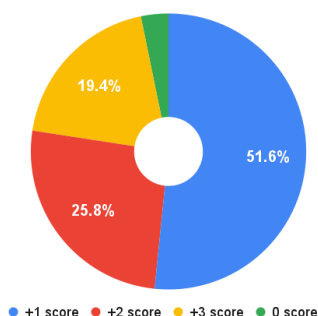
[ii] Enhanced Awareness & Engagement:

77% of pupils showed at least a 1-2 level increase in terms of showing evidence in enhanced aware-ness and engagement, while **13% showing a 3-level increase**.

[ii] Percentage in Scores Improvement for Pupils Showing Enhanced Awareness/ Engagement

- 48.4%
- 29.0%
- 12.9%
- 9.7%

+1 score   +2 score   +3 score   0 score
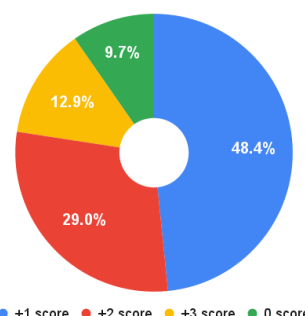
[iii] Percentage in Scores Improvement Among Pupils Initiating an Idea/Ideas

- 51.6%
- 25.8%
- 19.4%

+1 score   +2 score   +3 score   0 score

[iii] Evidence of Initiating Ideas

77% of pupils showed at least a 1-2 level increase in terms of showing evidence in initiating Idea/Ideas, while **19% showing a 3-level increase.**

[iv] Making Creative Choices

83% of pupils showed at least a 1-2 level increase in terms of showing evidence in making creative choice/choices, moving from little or no evidence to clear and significant evidence.

[iv] Percentage in Scores Improvement Among Pupils Making a Creative Choice/ Choices

- 41.9%
- 41.9%
- 9.7%
- 6.5%

+1 score   +2 score   +3 score   0 score
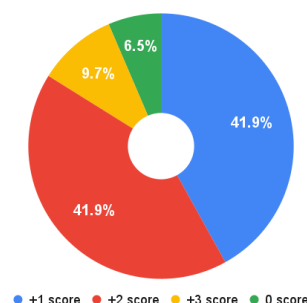
Figures 3 [i-iv]: Score Increases over time across the four skills areas (cont'd)

Teachers were quick to remark on levels of engagement, self-expression and interaction:

'Some pupils were engaged on the activity for longer than they would a tabletop activity'

'Hugely increased engagement, thinking outside the box, being engaged in their own way – realise if they all have things to offer in different, not always obvious ways, and recognizing these...'

'Overall I would remark on the impact on their wellbeing and their ability to expand their tools to express, communicate and develop interactions'

Individual pupils thrived with new mediums of expression:

'One child has severe speech sound difficulties but through dance and movement she was able to express her ideas and enjoyed being understood and part of the group'

'most children were coming up with their own creative ideas even if non-verbal'

Making progress towards defined learning goals

All teachers said 'Moving Stories' contributed to pupils achieving their desired learning goals, although there was less evidence of teachers articulating art form specific goals:

'this (relevant learning goals) would be more focused on skills and outcomes e.g. communication, social skills, developing empathy, relationships, working with others and motivation and enjoyment of school. The curriculum objectives can then be approached as a sort of side quest and knowledge gained there.'

One teacher did share specific learning goals which included art form specific goals for children in his class :

'to participate and take turns in rhythms, body parts and chants'

'to explore different levels of movement and move in different ways using different dynamics'
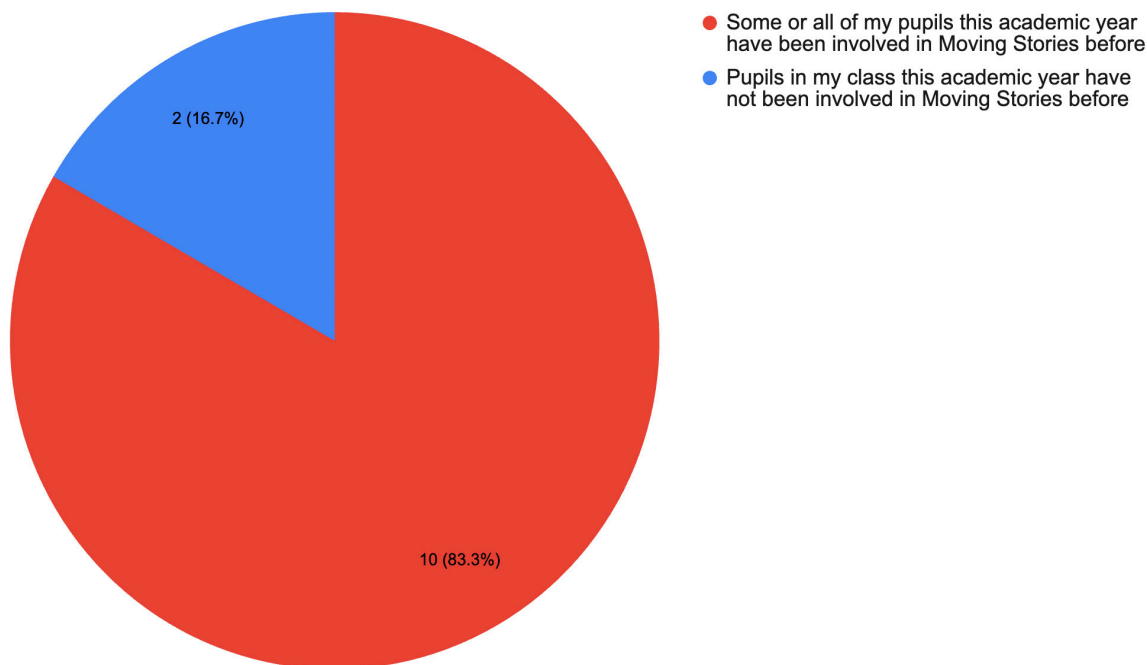
'to act in role'

'To work together with a partner/in a small group'

In this instance 6 out of 7 pupils progressed from 'rarely achieved' to sometimes or often achieved.

Children's Attainment and Progress over the two years

Figure 4: Proportion of Pupils involved in Moving Stories over two years

- Some or all of my pupils this academic year have been involved in Moving Stories before
- Pupils in my class this academic year have not been involved in Moving Stories before

2 (16.7%)

10 (83.3%)

Teachers and artists have remarked on the observable impact of pupils accessing two years of Moving Stories:

'Theres a clear increase in confidence in second year pupils. Their relationship to the artists is more trusting, their comprehension of expectations and appropriate behaviour clearer and their desire to contribute more apparent...'

1. One child who had remained peripheral in Year 1 when engaged in movement activity, demonstrated so much increased confidence in Year 2 that they were able to regularly use the language of dance and uncovered a flair for inventing original moves.

2. In another school, boys were seen working co-operatively through dance in pairs, without adult support creating *'tiny and tall'* movements and *'open and closed'* movements inspired by work on India. Standards achieved here were in line with age related expectations.

3. In a third school, a child inspired by his enjoyment of engaging in Moving Stories in Year 1, had joined a drama group outside school. His teacher remarked that in Year 2 *'He is able to suggest creative ideas and also seems more confident in class.'*

There are many examples of children who can communicate verbally being able to take on leading roles within drama sessions with confidence during their second year, and of children helping other children deepen their belief by listening and responding to each other in role.

Sometimes, owing to the nature of the needs in the group and developmental limitations, progress looks different: *'the children were increasingly comfortable engaging with activities – even without understanding theme, context or narrative. They were also increasingly able to communicate any desire not to engage with the activities offered if that was what was needed.'*

Child Voice Evaluation

To gather evaluation of the sessions directly from children, a consultation tool known as 'Talking Mats' was employed. This uses picture symbols relevant to the topic to represent different items/experiences and a 3 or 5 point scale. The participant takes each symbol and places it on the scale corresponding to their opinion. In total 22 children were consulted across the two years.

Overall, pupils liked most of the sessions. They said they enjoyed many aspects including moving like different animals and elements, dancing in a group, dancing with a partner, taking on a role, seeing their teachers take on roles, taking part in a story. Some children expressed that they found showing what they had done to the rest of their class difficult, One commented that she felt shy. Another child expressed that she found it difficult working as a whole group as it could get noisy. She said she preferred working in a small group or in pairs. One child said she didn't like one particular movement activity during a session but said that she did enjoy other movement elements. All children were positive about the workshop leaders.

The evaluation results were shared with the artists, particularly when a child shared that there were elements they had not enjoyed. There was discussion about how to work on this to encourage the child to feel more at ease, for example, changing their role in the group during that activity. It was also important to consider observation data alongside the use of Talking Mats as the level of participation by the child sometimes suggested a higher level of interest than the picture choices suggested.

Pupils responded positively to being consulted. They seemed to enjoy the 1:1 time with an adult and it felt as though it was perceived as a 'special job'. Once one child had been nominated by the class teacher, other children would often also volunteer, keen to be involved. The method is so accessible that the children didn't feel they were being tested or asked questions where they had to get an answer right or know what to say. However, many of the children consulted used the Talking Mat as a starting point for conversation about the session, building on their opinions with more discussion, e.g. 'that was funny', 'I love dancing', 'I was scared'.

The plan for TAs to carry out Talking Mats with children following initial coaching was much harder to implement than anticipated. One TA expressed that she really enjoyed consulting with the children in this way, never having used Talking Mats previously. She said that she could tell that it was an effective way of getting their thoughts without them having to find the words to express themselves.

Outcomes for Artists

Overview of the impact Moving Stories has had on professional practice

Artists were asked during the end point survey to consider a series of impact statements and indicate the degree to which they agreed with them. Due to artists varying levels of previous experience working in special school settings, the level of added value of this project to artists' current practice varies from individual to individual – depending on their starting point. However, the majority agree or strongly agree that they have continued to extend their practice as an artist working in schools across Year 2, particularly expanding their understanding of working with children with SEND.

All have seen teachers leading dance and drama activities with confidence, although results indicate that they more strongly agree with the statement when teachers are working through drama than when working through dance. All agree or strongly agree that they have seen children make significant progress while engaging in Moving Stories sessions. Opinions vary slightly about the extent to which teachers have deepened their understanding of their specific art form with one artist disagreeing with the statement. However, there was much more consensus about the extent to which they hoped to continue working in SEND settings with all agreeing or strongly agreeing with this statement. Similarly, all agree or strongly agree that their practice has benefited from continuing to work closely with artists from a different specialism.

Figure 5: Artist End-point Survey: A Quick Overview
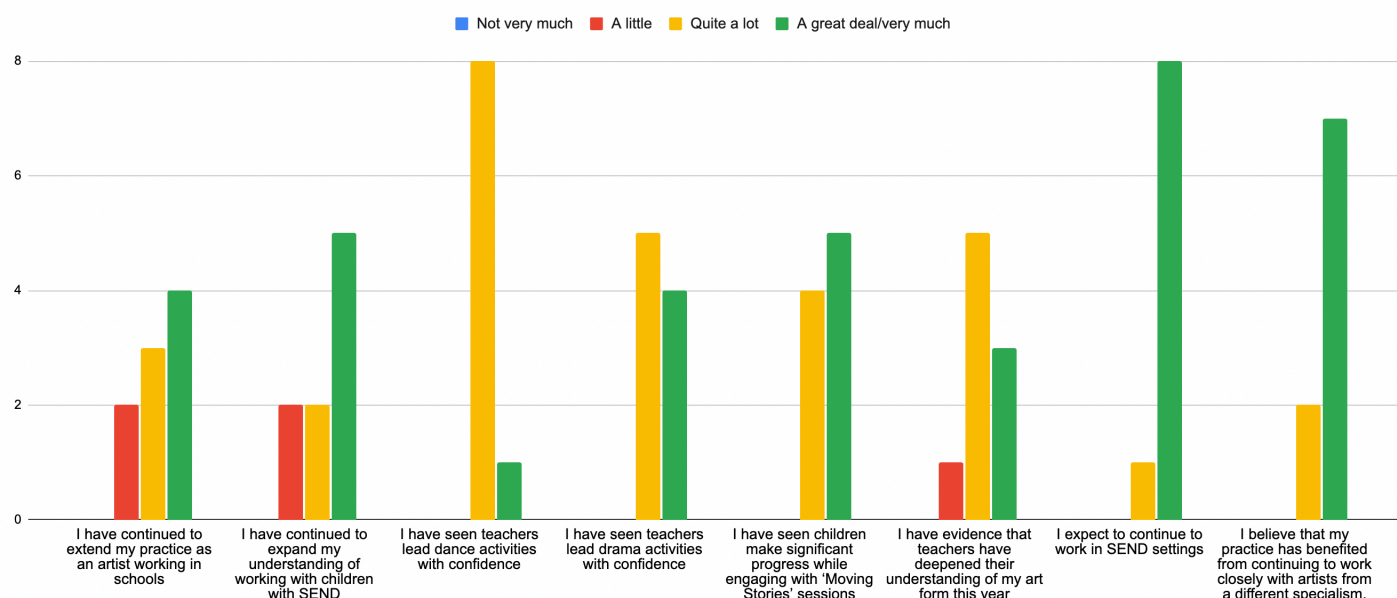
One artist qualified their response with useful detail about the shift of focus in Year 2:

'I feel one of the biggest learning points for me has been how to support teachers to develop their practice...I've had to think more deeply about my own practice in order to support teachers effectively – and developed a sensitivity of when to step in and offer supporting ideas and when to step back and allow teachers to take on more leadership...'

Desired Outcome: Artists reflect on the effectiveness of dance and drama techniques and their impact on pupils' learning

When artists define what the elements of effective Moving Stories practice are they have itemised very similar features to those identified by the teachers. This is not surprising as they have collaborated so closely, however artists' use of figurative descriptive language is sometimes a little different from how the teachers describe the work, as is well illustrated by the paragraph below, developed from a brainstorm on the 17th July 2024.

The immersive world of Moving Stories provides opportunities for learners to share their understanding and express themselves both verbally and physically. Like play, moving stories is fun, in the moment and open-ended. It is sensory, discursive, physical, aural and visual. Using story /narrative as a broad concept Moving Stories can include adults and /or children in role and requires movement, which can be supported by sound/music. There are moments of dramatic tension and magic. It encourages original thought. There is a clear structure, with a beginning, middle and an end and sessions often include a journey. Behaviours and activities are modelled, and curiosity is encouraged. Repetition, both within a session and week to week, deepens the learning. Sensory props and textiles are often used to help children engage with the imagined context and scaffold participation. A sense of agency is fostered and children are encouraged to contribute their ideas, which are valued.

Integrating both dance and drama into Moving Stories sessions offers unique benefits and some challenges:

'Both disciplines offer safe spaces for emotional expression, helping children understand and manage their emotions better.' Artist – Year 1

While some sessions seem more movement based and some more drama based *'that is ok – it didn't feel one-sided – rather it provides two different languages with which to explore the various topics/themes/narratives.'* When working through both art forms there are *'more points of inclusion'* offering young people multiple ways in. Rather than rigorous turn-taking between dance and drama this extended collaborative time enabled the development of *'a fully integrated approach'* in many schools in Year 1.

In Year 2, some schools continue to run a fully integrated approach, while others separate the art forms more distinctively. This has arisen partly because of the challenge that effective delivery of the fully integrated approach places on all the adults in the room, and partly because the individual elements of Moving Stories, once mastered, are portable into many different features of the curriculum. The integrated model had worked so well with the presence of two artists, some teachers demonstrated some anxiety and self-doubt as to whether the model would work so well without:

'I think I am worried that it would be disappointing for pupils/not enough adults to make it work.'

Desired Outcome: Artists identify the specific professional benefits of this kind of extended cross-arts creative enquiry in SEND settings

Artists' individual training techniques are deeply embedded in their artistic practice and approaches vary from professional to professional. The table below attempts to group common approaches used and illustrate nuanced differences between Year 1 and Year 2 of the project.

	Year 1 (Each artist has 12 sessions in school)	Year 2 (Each artists has 6 sessions in school)
Participant Observation	Teachers act as a 'participant observer' watching the artists modelling techniques they will later practice, while helping individual children access the session successfully. Artists observe each other and look for points of creative engagement between the two art forms.	Co-delivery of playful, creative sessions, especially early on in Year 2, so teachers could experience familiar techniques with their new class and observe and identify which techniques have most impact. Later artists can become participant observers in sessions led by teachers.
Modeling	Artists display a 'smorgasbord' of techniques, strategies and resources that address pupils' learning needs, the planned curriculum and teachers' appetite and interest. Resources are introduced such musical instruments, multi-sensory props and recorded music. The 'Moving Stories' model unfolds organically.	Strategies are stripped back and refined to those core approaches that teachers are keen to master. There is an element of simplification at work. Sometimes an artist models, then teacher repeats with tweaks the following week. Teachers bring ideas to the table and the artist helps to frame these ideas in a creative form that is most accessible to the pupils.
Planning and Reflection	Artists and teachers brainstorm ideas at the beginning of a topic in a planning session. Teachers and artists engage in reflective dialogue, exploring the rationale behind the techniques. The post session conversations are key to deepening teachers understanding and offer first experiences of structuring dance and drama sessions	Artists model critically engaging with practice. Artist and teacher discuss what could have done differently, what could be adapted, how certain techniques could be embedded into the wider curriculum. Specific and carefully articulated praise is used, for example, to help the teacher recognise when they have made choices that have intuitively increased the impact of the activity or facilitated better access.
Sharing Practice	Training time is focused specifically on exchange of practice between artists, between teachers and between teachers and artists. Time is used to reflect on the impact of the work for all parties, including the children. Active sharing of recent practice on cohort days is universally rated as valuable Online sessions are run for artists with a mentor and one online introductory training session is run for TAs.	Training time is focused specifically on deepening teacher understanding through exposure to more theoretical underpinning. Additional training is offered in dance, where teacher confidence is more variable. Time is used to reflect on the impact of the work for all parties. Teachers lead an in-school training session for their colleagues in school demonstrating their increased understanding

Desired Outcome: Artists identify which training approaches have been most effective at developing teachers' confidence and skill

Artists often work in isolation. The quality of the working relationships in this project and its ambition have been *'rejuvenating'* and helped to develop artists practice, both in their own art form and in a more integrated way. New skills and knowledge, new ways of working, new insights into disability, and the importance of involvement of individuals with lived experience – were all listed as valuable professional benefits. Working closely over time with young people with additional/differing needs has had a profound effect on artists' levels of understanding about access needs and fostered feelings of empathy.

The space for artists to share practice afforded at the start of the project; the weekly planning and reflection time; the cohort days and the presence of an artists' mentor have all contributed to enabling artists to reflect on creative approaches that have maximum impact...although many have informally said even more in person peer-to-peer sessions would have been helpful. The opportunity to talk about practice and widen artists' professional network has proved invaluable.

Some individuals have reconsidered previously held views e.g. a dance artist with an aversion to using props has completely changed her perspective after her involvement with multi-sensory props in Moving Stories. A drama specialist comments:

'I've really benefited from working with a dance artist and their incredible wealth of knowledge and experience of working through dance in a participatory and inclusive way. I've also really enjoyed the process of working closely with the teachers on developing their literacy curriculum.'

Artists have gained immense respect for teachers working in Special school settings and found it rewarding to watch their partner teachers fly solo with increasing levels of confidence.

Some artists had not worked on a PHF project before and found the focus on teacher development and opportunities for different projects to reflect together interesting and valuable. Another remarked that they had found it interesting to work closely with a small arts organisation like Peoplescape, appreciating its ethos and ethical practice.

One artist who is also a parent acknowledged that they have learned from the teachers a broader repertoire of behaviour management strategies they can use with their own children.

The challenges of Year 2

Adopting the role of mentor is a rare opportunity and was not familiar to all artists but they quickly adapted to the challenge:

'I was encouraged to step back and allow the teacher to take more ownership of the sessions'

One artist wrote: *'Year 2 felt more about supporting, cheerleading and reinforcing the creativity that teachers had developed in Year 1.'*

A key feature of Year 2 seems to be the extent to which children in some classes were new to Moving Stories. If the cohort differed considerably from Year 1 some artists felt like the exploratory stage felt like starting again – but with less time and support:

'this year both artists found the change in make-up of the groups and them having such profound needs quite difficult and in some moments, outside of the realms of our expertise. There was a lot more problem solving and we even drew upon other artists on the program for support...'

'I felt it was harder in some cases for the teachers to transfer the skills they had learned as they were just learning the children's needs and triggers.'

'What we did have from Year 1 was a great working relationship with the class teacher and a shared language. The teacher was anxious ...but it did mean we had more opportunity to explore and develop different ways of working which meant the teachers' skills were further developed. If the teacher had stayed with the same children she may not have gained as many skills/as much confidence as she did'

Some teachers were fortunate to have more settled classes or smaller groups in Year 2 which accelerated their progress to leading sessions independently.

A number of artists did feel that the reduced number of sessions was problematic – working alone could be more exposing.

'We spent Year 1 thinking about how art forms could be combined/shared practice – it felt strange to "de-couple" these in Year 2.'

'I think it was a mistake to only have 6 sessions for the artists – it did feel like we needed more...Still much was achieved in the short time we had and I saw all teachers grow in terms of what they were able to deliver by the end of the project. It just feels like our job is not finished.'

There were additional frustrations experienced around securing reflection time and working space. Could the reflection template have been shorter? Due to lack of resources and school problems with staffing, cover to support the reflective features of the project were not always available, making the project harder to deliver. Classroom size was not always conducive to expressive, active learning.

Such an unusual and ambitious longitudinal project attracted a lot of attention. All partners felt it was important to document and evaluate in detail. This led to the sessions often having unfamiliar visiting adults which in some cases artists found distracting.

Outcomes for Partner Organisations

Overview

Three partner organisations of various sizes and remits brought diverse skills, extensive experience and additional resources to this project and had both immediate and longer-term aspirations for outcomes, including producing good documentation of the process. Project leadership and management were complex and expensive. The steering group was formed to juggle all these elements. It was chaired by LEAN, as the agency responsible for leading on the original project bid to the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, to ensure the agreed enquiry question was addressed effectively. Two project managers took charge of day-to-day operational communication and trouble shooting. The reporting structure was clear.

Each partner brought something to the table: Peoplescape have specialist skills in this area, an existing model of practice with SEND schools which they wanted to extend and is co-directed by someone who designs and makes bespoke multi-sensory props. Trinity Laban is a conservatoire with a strong track record, well-appointed working spaces, regularly working with diverse children with contrasting learning needs and wanted to further develop the skills of their community artists and relationships with special schools; LEAN is a cultural education partnership which holds a long standing brokerage role in Lewisham's arts infrastructure and strong drivers around access for all.

Desired Outcome: Partners reflect on the value and impact of these approaches to further develop creative practice.

All partners agree that the experience has been rich. Each is taking away learning and new opportunities: a group of artists with strong first-hand experience of working in special school settings; affirmations that dance and drama are very effective at increasing the engagement, communication skills and creativity of children with specific learning needs.

'Peoplescape artists have developed skills in using movement effectively with pupils with SEND. We have already drawn upon the dance artists expertise in other Peoplescape projects and will continue to do so in the future. So, the project has enhanced our practice' - Peoplescape

Desired Outcome: Partners recognise and articulate the contribution this programme has made to their professional development as organisations

Partner organisations see the project outcomes as evidence of impact on pupils' and teachers' learning that can be used in future funding applications to further develop this practice. The new professional networks also offer mutual support for the continuation of their work.

'LEAN has benefitted greatly from extending its knowledge and understanding of SEND practice through working with the two delivery partners and has deepened its relationships with Senior Leaders in SEND settings throughout the borough. This supports LEANs goal to establish a strategic arts SEND network for Lewisham schools in the organisation's role as facilitator of Lewisham's Cultural Education Partnership' - LEAN

Outcomes for School Leaders

Overview

It was always understood that 'Buy In' from school leaders would be key to the embedding of Moving Stories approaches in curriculum planning going forward. Schools committed to release participating teachers for designated training/planning sessions and for half hour reflections after delivery and received funding for staff cover costs. The aims, objectives and demands of the programme were made clear to each participating school, who then contracted into the initiative. A senior leader from one of the participating schools joined the programme's steering group.

Most schools have covered teachers for reflection and planning sessions, particularly in Year 1, placing additional resource behind the work. A Deputy Head for one school has been highly proactive and on the programme's steering group particularly in Year 1 and her school accommodates these partner-led meetings. A member of SLT from another school was one of the participating teachers in Year 1. SLT appear to have experienced some initiative fatigue in Year 2. It is the teachers that are driving the ambition of this programme and direct action to increase the involvement and buy in of SLT.

In Year 1 SLT were encouraged to observe the programme in action and discuss how it is going in a meeting with their targeted teachers. In Year 2 they were asked to support a whole school staff meeting disseminating strategies that were working well and attend an interview with the Director of LEAN reflecting on the impact of the two-year initiative.

Desired Outcome: School leaders reflect on the value and impact of these approaches

Four senior staff agreed to be interviewed at the end of the programme with varying degrees of direct exposure to Moving Stories. All expressed an interest in being part of an ongoing Lewisham SEND network for arts-based learning, although the level of charging would affect the numbers of teachers who could attend sessions. Where internal staff meetings took place they were very well received and impactful, resulting in the sharing of schemes of work and establishing of resource stores. There was unanimous agreement on the value of the Moving Stories approach with comments such as,

'a lot of children have outcomes to achieve around communication and interaction'

'helped give the children more of a voice – find a different way to have a voice' a 'multi-sensory approach to learning'

'helped raise staff's expectations of the children ' it helped the children to recall prior learning...make knowledge stick.'

Desired Outcome: School leaders support the embedding of this practice within and beyond their school

Project teachers had been targeted for involvement for many different reasons and continue to carry SLT expectations re wider dissemination and internal training after the project has finished.

Teachers are generally positive about SLT support:

'I think our SLT is very happy and supportive about us keeping the project rolling, as reflected in our internal planning…'

'Very engaged and supportive. We are doing Artsmark which ties in beautifully.'

'Specific individuals with SLT have been incredibly supportive of the project. All are impressed with the outcomes and the ripple effects on school, children and staff. Again, a wider issue is time poverty and external pressures on schools in general to meet LA expectations and standards, with minimal resources – time and staff'

However, in Year 2 protecting planning and reflection time proved challenging in more than one school and it was hard to get SLT to prioritise this.

One deputy head had some regrets that the project did not reach more teachers and wishes the staff meeting about Moving Stories had happened much earlier in the programme so that there could have been more observations of the work in action by interested teachers and TAs. This same deputy wishes she had had time to become more involved and involved the TAs earlier, suggesting that a 'video talking about what you do, the goals, snippets of these kinds of sessions just so they've (TAs) got some understanding of what a 'Moving Story' is might have been very useful.

In Conclusion

'Moving Stories' is a project ambitious of scale, and concept, containing elements of innovative research while also delivering an imaginative model of continuing professional development and learning. It has been embraced fully by artists and teachers and is having a clear impact on targeted children in the six partner special schools and settings.

Although the direct involvement of senior leaders in the programme has varied from school to school, teachers are optimistic that the approaches will become embedded into their curricula, and all have included these approaches in their planning for the academic Year 2025/26. There is scope to explore ways of increasing internal school impact. The use of school-based training sessions led by project teachers in Year 2 was particularly effective and could have been built upon if it had occurred earlier in the project.

The creative approach

Moving Stories uses dance and drama together to help learners with diverse and complex needs express themselves both verbally, non-verbally and physically, engage in imagined activity, make creative choices and initiate their own ideas. There are clear indications of pupil progress. Moving Stories is a flexible approach that offers opportunities for personalising learning. Children's ability to direct their own learning is encouraged and a sense of personal agency reinforced. Children who experienced Moving Stories both in Year 1 and Year 2 demonstrated their learning with greater confidence and skill than those who only had access for one year.

An augmented pedagogical toolkit

All project teachers have experimented with leading the Moving Stories integrated approach pioneered in Year 1 and worked with dance and drama as individual art forms. All teachers recognise that their repertoire of teaching approaches has grown and their confidence to lead dance and drama activities been enhanced, although they acknowledge that it has taken a little longer to feel secure teaching dance than teaching drama. Teachers articulate that the project has broadened their expectations of what their pupils can achieve through working expressively and imaginatively.

Teachers observe an increase in the confidence and active participation of Teaching Assistants over the life of the project. The collaborative creative approach has had a positive impact on team rapport, and distributed the leadership of creative learning across the whole team.

Preserving the individual identity of both art forms while exploring just how they might be used in an integrated way in the same session has been a talking point amongst project partners, but the structure of the project has allowed for both pathways to be explored.

The training model

The artists' approach to the professional development of teachers in their specialist art forms has been a flexible one - sometimes experimenting alongside teachers; sometimes modelling; sometimes mentoring; sometimes problem solving; sometimes reflecting; sometimes reinforcing; sometimes training directly. This has enabled teachers to deepen their understanding and adapt the use of dance and drama to their own individual teaching styles and the demands of their planned curriculum- thus growing in confidence. Opinions differ as to whether more artists' time in Year 2 of the project would have had a positive impact on teacher confidence and skill.

Both Teachers and Artists express a wish that they could have had more off-site training together and increased opportunities to strengthen their network, including visiting each other's schools to watch sessions in action. Many participants feel that an increase in the inclusion of teaching assistants in more live training experiences would have had a beneficial effect in Moving Stories sessions. The inclusion of an experienced disabled artist acting as a critical friend to artists working on the project was valuable, but project partners have expressed an interest in exploring how disabled artists might have been integrated more fully into this work?

Project management

Moving Stories has been administratively and organisationally complex and required the meeting of diverse needs and the building of many new working relationships. The partner-led steering group, and role of the two project managers has been vital to the project's success. Communication between the core team and schools has at times been difficult because of key staff's lack of capacity to respond quickly.

Project legacy

The legacy of Moving Stories is strong – broadened expectations of children; stronger teaching teams; artists whose commitment to working in special schools has been reinforced; expanded teacher and artist toolkits; new schemes of work and resource banks; new documentation to illustrate the value of the work; new professional networks; new employment opportunities for artists; a new Moving Stories' Handbook; new bespoke sensory resources in school; new applications for funding to extend this work…Now what remains is to disseminate the power of Moving Stories to those who can seize the baton!

Appendices

Appendix 1: Full list of special schools and settings

The 'Moving Stories' Programme is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of their 'Teacher Development' initiative. There are three delivery organisations: LEAN, Trinity Laban and Peoplescape Theatre, working in partnership with six schools:

Athelney Resource Base – space within a primary school that has additional resources tailored to support children with an autism diagnosis

Brent Knoll special school for children with complex social, communication and interaction difficulties, including autism

Drumbeat community maintained special school and ASD service

New Woodlands special school for children with SEN including those with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties

Tidemill community primary school's specialist provision for children with speech, language and communication difficulties

Watergate special school for pupils with severe learning difficulties, complex needs and a number of children who have an additional diagnosis of autism.

Appendix 2: Full list of desired outcomes against which the project has been evaluated

Enquiry question: How can using drama and dance in SEND settings develop teachers' pedagogical practice and support the strategic embedding of this practice in whole school planning?

The change we want to see

Through involvement in the programme over two years teachers will:

1. Identify which drama and dance approaches are most effective at building SEND pupils' expressive, verbal and non-verbal communication skills
2. Understand and practice these strategies and techniques with artists' support
3. Understand and use these strategies and techniques independently with confidence
4. Reflect on which training approaches have been most effective at building their understanding, confidence and skill
5. Plan to embed this expanded repertoire of dance and drama approaches in their planning in the future

Through learning in and through drama and dance pupils will:

6. Develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills
7. Demonstrate increased levels of awareness and engagement
8. Develop the confidence to initiate ideas and make creative choices

Through collaborating with artists from different disciplines and teachers with experience in SEND settings, artists, arts practitioners and partner organisations will:

1. Reflect on the dance and drama techniques and pedagogies used and how they can build SEND pupils' engagement, expressive, verbal and non-verbal communication skills
2. Identify the specific professional benefits of this kind of longitudinal, cross-arts creative enquiry
3. Identify the specific professional benefits of creative partnership working in SEND settings
4. Reflect on which training approaches have been most effective at building teachers' confidence and skill
5. Recognise and articulate the contribution this programme has made to their professional development as individuals and organisations

Through observing and learning about the impact of this programme we hope that school leaders will:
1. Reflect on the value and impact of these approaches
2. Support the embedding of this practice within and beyond their school

End of Year 1 Interim Evaluation Summary

Moving Stories Programme

July 2024

Compiled from a report by Sally Manser

Introduction: About Moving Stories

The 'Moving Stories' Programme, June 2023-September 2025, is funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation as part of their 'Teacher Development' initiative

The Moving Stories 'Enquiry Question: ***How can using drama and dance in SEND settings develop teachers' pedagogical practice and support the strategic embedding of this practice in whole school planning?***

Who are the Moving Stories partners?

Three delivery **arts organisations**: Lewisham Education Arts Network, Trinity Laban and Peoplescape Theatre;

Are working in partnership with **six schools**: Athelney Primary School, Brent Knoll School, Drumbeat School & ASD Service, New Woodlands School, Tidemill Academy, Watergate School

In the Moving Stories Programme there are 8 dance and drama artists who work with 12 teachers. two classes per school reaching 96 primary age pupils in total, the majority of whom are boys.

What's happened so far?

In Year One, teams of 2 artists delivered 12 classroom sessions to each class, working closely with teachers and support staff. The aim was that teachers would gain skills and confidence to take an increasing lead within sessions.

Teachers attended 2 collaborative learning days with artists at Trinity Laban. Planning and reflection time was also set aside for the 'triads' of 2 artists + class teacher to ensure activities effectively met pupil needs

In Year 2, mentored by the artists, the aim will be for teachers be able to develop and deliver sessions independently, disseminate their learning to colleagues and embed the practice within the school

This summary report:

A detailed evaluation of the project through surveys, interviews and observations is being undertaken by independent evaluator Sally Manser. A summary of the key points identified in the interim Year 1 which will be of benefit to schools is included here:

Outcomes for teachers

Teachers can identify the features of "Moving Stories" they value the most and why:

- The way 'Moving Stories' sessions are structured to foster engagement & enhance learning

- Specific Drama elements that encourage communication, self-expression & creativity

- Specific Dance elements that encourage communication, self-expression & creativity

- The collaborative planning & and shared reflection elements of the training process

Teachers have grown in confidence.

Teachers have developed an appetite to deepen their understanding and skill

Themes of mid-programme teacher feedback

- Teachers articulate more anxiety and less experience delivering dance than drama elements

- Teachers acknowledge the need to build skills of support staff.

- Teachers have requested supporting reference materials/ a 'Moving Stories' tool kit?

- Teachers are concerned about delivering sessions alone for diverse reasons

- Teachers want to deepen children's learning, manage behaviour and plan for progression

'I found our process informative and collaborative, and I was given the opportunity to progress into leading the sessions "

'I've learnt a lot about use of dance and movement – something I was definitely not confident in leading before...'

Outcomes for pupils

Pupil outcomes have reached beyond the desired outcomes of the programme

'students do surprising things that we weren't expecting'

Teachers report that 'Moving Stories' sessions help children to

1. *Communicate both verbally and non-verbally*
2. *Generate ideas, be creative, reflect and even bring new ideas to next session*
3. *Develop expressive skills and share how they are feeling using movement and /or voice in a creative space*
4. *Engage, be motivated and participate fully in creative activities*
5. *Grow in confidence and self-esteem, and develop a sense of belonging*
6. *Encounter movement and drama that gives them control*
7. *Focus, concentrate and persist at tasks*
8. *Collaborate with peers and adults and handle proximity and touch*
9. *Secure space to own and lead elements of the dance and drama work*
10. *Regulate their emotions and recognize emotions in each other*

Wider observations about pupil progress:

- 'Moving Stories' sessions can circumvent students' self-consciousness
- In 'Moving Stories' sessions pupils demonstrate prior learning of many kinds
- Cross Curricular links are being exploited to the full
- The lesson content is more prescribed where NC is in place. Here there is some concern to identify measurable outcomes
- Exploring themes and characters through dance and drama 'c*an make a difficult text more accessible*'.

'Moving stories has massively helped children work on the EHCP targets particularly around SEMH and communication'

The Bigger Picture – Our current preoccupations:

What will be the legacy of this work for individuals, for organisations and for networks?

How can we champion this approach and make it sustainable?

School Leadership: How can we disseminate and embed the learning across each school?

How can we further building teacher skill, understanding and commitment so that the work can be delivered independently?

Peoplescape
theatre

TRINITY LABAN

/LEAN
Lewisham Education
Arts Network

phf Paul Hamlyn
Foundation