

## **Meadow Arts Research Project** funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation in collaboration with Worcester University and The House of Imagination

**9US, Sally Harper, Julia Lloydlangston**

**Thinking differently** – a blog about our journey so far. Number 1.

I'm Sally, I'm a creative practitioner working with a variety of schools and community settings throughout the Midlands.

I was lucky to be offered the residency at Chadsgrove School for part of the Thinking Differently, Paul Hamlyn Project. I knew it was going to be a fabulous project to work on because of the people involved, the wealth of knowledge, skills and experience meant that we were all going to be on a learning journey.

The heart of the project was to give the young people involved the chance to work in a different but inspiring way, so that we were able to measure how their skills, confidence and self esteem had improved and developed. The background to the project was to use principles from Early years education from Reggio Emilia, which I have worked with for many years and is at the centre of my education practise.

9US were the group selected to work on the project, alongside Julia, the art teacher. We had discussed initial activities to kick start the project, workshop-based sessions seemed to be the best way forward to keep the students interested and on task. For our initial workshops we used the theme of ourselves so we could explore painting, collage and mixed media, allowing the students to guide us through their ideas. I wanted to give the students the chance to create something for themselves to start with, so we decided to make sketchbooks using recycled materials. All the books were different shapes and sizes, photographs, drawings and images were added that we referred to each week. We also created a large group sketchbook to add our journey to.

Our journey continued week to week.....





## Thinking Differently – Our journey at Chadsgrove. Number 2.

Thinking differently, thinking of how to inspire the group and encouraging them to enjoy and contribute to the sessions. This was giving them the option to design and plan their own learning by documenting the process, reviewing what we'd done and allowing them to continually reflect.

The sessions were based around their ideas, on asking the group what they'd like to do each week, here are some of the ideas: Disney, animals, unicorns, painting, cutting, sewing and making. At the beginning of each session we looked at photos from the previous session, all the group loved seeing themselves and it enabled us to revisit what we'd started.

Over the next sessions we developed lots of different activities including creating paper people/ sculptures of their choice (there were lots of family members, pets, Disney characters and celebrities) They loved doing this as they requested this for several weeks. Also, in addition, we painted, cut different materials, constructed from recycled materials, painted acetate, used light and shadow worked on a large and small scale, worked in groups and individually and got messy!

We noticed that several of the group had become much more confident with sharing their ideas and using materials. They had also shown clear progress with how they handled materials and skills developed. There was also notable difference in behaviour for some of the students as they participated freely without needing any intervention to help them complete the sessions.

The group have been a delight to work with alongside Julia (art teacher) and support staff Jane and Steph.

Thank you to everyone at Chadsgrove school for making this a great experience so far. I'm very much looking forward to resuming the project whenever we can and being inspired by the group once more.











