



Report Author

John Nicholls
Community Programme Manager
Children's Parliament

Children's Parliament

Summerhall
1 Summerhall Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1PL
0131 558 9030
www.childrensparliament.org.uk

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Acknowledgements

Joanna Boyce	Creative Art Works Scotland
Yonnie Fraser	Creative Art Works Scotland
Alastair Ewen	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Alyson Honeyman	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Bernie Devlin	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Kayleigh Wilson	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Cathy Bryceland	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Andy Rowan	Renfrewshire Council Youth Services
Graeme McKinnon	Children's Parliament
Sinead Naidoo	Children's Parliament
Chelsea Stinson	Children's Parliament
Stuart England	Children's Parliament
Lyver Chavez	Children's Parliament
John Nicholls	Children's Parliament

Staff, pupil, parents and carers at

Renfrew High School

Arkleston Primary School

Kirklandneuk Primary School

Newmains Primary School

Delivered in Partnership



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Children's Parliament is Scotland's Centre for Excellence for children's participation and engagement.

We demonstrate good practice by engaging children in their early years and in middle childhood (up to 14) in projects, consultations and community programmes.

We inform and influence public policy and professional practice and build the capacity and skills of adults and public bodies, including Government, through reporting, publication/dissemination, modelling and training.

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It's a New Dawn
It's a New Day
And I'm feeling good!



Scope of this Report

Central to this project, and all of Children's Parliament's work is a Rights Based Approach: a way of working with children and young people that supports them to understand their Rights and creates experiences that are supportive, nurturing and ultimately, transformative.

It is recognised that in the contemporary funding and management culture of Scotland there is a duty and obligation for organisations such as Children's Parliament to be transparent about the outcomes of work we undertake with children and young people. Indeed, we strongly support this duty. However, given the nature of our work we find resonance with the well reported challenges and concerns that the contemporary culture of evaluation and impact assessment does not adequately capture the subtleties and complexities of this Rights Based Approach.

How can you evaluate the glint in a child's eye, the change in facial expressions as a child relaxes, the sense of joy and achievement experienced when adults see children

unleashing their creativity? How can you record a mood of industrious concentration? How do you prevent the achievements of one child being lost in a pile of cold hard data? What of the teacher's tears as she hears of or witnesses individual children's triumphs? All of these events have been realities during this project, but how do we convey them so that you *feel* them and *believe* in their truth?

We capture what we can, but this report has limitations. To really understand the impact of this work requires people to be present in the moment and to connect with the children. As one teacher reflected during a whole class workshop; "this is so valuable for me to be able to just see my children and *be with them*, without feeling I am assessing or reporting on them".

Capturing the transformative power of relationships and human interaction is beyond the reach of a report as modest as this, but we do hope that the quotes from participants and the images, along with some more objective measures help to share the sense of achievement that the project team of children and adults rightfully feel and own.



"Follow Your Heart"

S1 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback

About the Project

*Fish in the sea, you know how I feel
River runnin' free, you know how I feel
Blossom on the tree, you know how I feel
It's a new dawn, it's a new day,
It's a new life for me,
And I'm feelin' good*

"Feeling Good" by
Anthony Newley & Leslie Bricusse

Moving on Up was the working title of a collaborative project between Children's Parliament, Creative Artworks Scotland, Our Place Youth Project and Renfrewshire Council.

The project supported 150 children and young people to have their say about what they need to support them through the transition from primary school to secondary school. Through questionnaires and subsequent whole class workshops, children were encouraged to draw, speak, act and imagine what their future at high school could be like.

The project worked with children from Renfrew High School's three feeder primary schools and with S1 students who had already made the transition to high school. All 150 students took part in class workshops which sought

to increase confidence around transition as well as generate raw material to inform the creation of a large-scale mural. Thereafter 16 students were selected to be Mural Artists for a week. They worked with staff to realise a 25 foot mural entitled **New Dawn, New Day.**

Over 900 people-hours have been invested in bringing the mural to life. A mural that depicts many of the changes that children have experienced in life so far; the myriad of emotions that populate children's hearts and minds when change occurs; the vital roles that adults and other children can play when supporting students; a recognition of how we can help ourselves when faced with life's challenges; the central role of friendship and relationships and ultimately, children's vision of a future of abundance, optimism and opportunity.

At the start of any project such as this there is always a sense of trepidation, a sense of the unknown. We start a mural week with 6 ominously white boards, each 6 foot tall and as wide as

“Children
have the
right to be
heard”

Teacher

our arms outstretched. What happens next is like a kind of creative magic: children play with ideas that they and their friends generated in the classroom; ideas come and go; roles and personalities emerge; metaphors coalesce around themes; energy builds and a growing sense of possibility becomes clear. Of course, such a process does not emerge by accident, rather by careful planning and design.

Central to all of the work of Children's Parliament is our commitment to a Rights Based Approach. Not only should we be teaching children about their Rights (and despite legislation and policy to support the realisation of children's rights, many children remain unaware of what their rights in Scotland are) we are committed to working in such a way that children feel heard, valued, powerful and important.

We firmly believe that all learning environments have the potential to make children feel all these things and more.

Within the creative context of this project we drew on the expertise of Joanna Boyce and Yonnie Fraser of

Creative Art Works Scotland to help us fulfil our shared ambitions. It was their vision that helped drive the ideas forward, kept us on track and ensured all the children were meaningfully contributing to a complex and challenging task with a sense of fun, possibility and ambition.

We had Alyson Honeyman and her team from Youth Services working as an integral part of the project team from the start. As well as providing essential local knowledge, the team of youth workers added an additional valuable creative layer of reflection throughout the mural week with their lively application of puppetry and mask-work. The Youth Services Team play a central role supporting pupils at Renfrew High School. Their collaboration on this project enabled students to learn of their work locally and, most importantly, allowed relationships to develop.

As well as the process being transformative for participants – and we really do believe that the process instilled greater confidence and nurtured new and enduring friendships – the physical product of a dramatic large-scale artwork leaves behind a lasting legacy for local schools.

Support me Love me Care for me

What children want from adults
P7 Questionnaire Feedback



Project Aims

The aspirations of the project were four-fold:

1. Increase children and young people's understanding of their rights and the power of their voices
2. Support children and young people to articulate their needs in relation to transition from primary to secondary school through a bespoke series of class workshops and a creative arts project
3. Facilitate shared dialogues between teachers and students around transition
4. Provide a supportive environment for children to nurture mutual support and confidence around transition

Working in close partnership with **Our Place Youth Project** also gave us a shared opportunity to work towards their broader aims which are:

1. Improve confidence and raise aspirations as a result of increased access to learning and training opportunities
2. Increase capacity to influence decision making and project delivery through participation in continued consultation
3. Increase involvement in the community as a result of improved access to volunteering and citizenship opportunities

"Children's views
should be considered
more. They are
sometimes
underestimated in
the sense that they
have more opinions
and views related to
experiences."

Teacher

The Rights Based Approach

The Human Rights Approach focuses on the inalienable human rights of each individual and the responsibility of duty bearers to fulfil their obligations to respect and protect these rights. The Human Rights Approach gives importance to *process* as well as outcomes and recognises the underlying determinants of children's needs as well as the presenting issues.

Our approach at Children's Parliament is based on the development of open and honest relationships with children, on valuing their worth and their views and on a commitment to creating a space within which they feel safe, challenged and trusted. This means valuing the process of participation as a means of learning and gaining skills, as well as valuing the products of that process.

The work is based on:

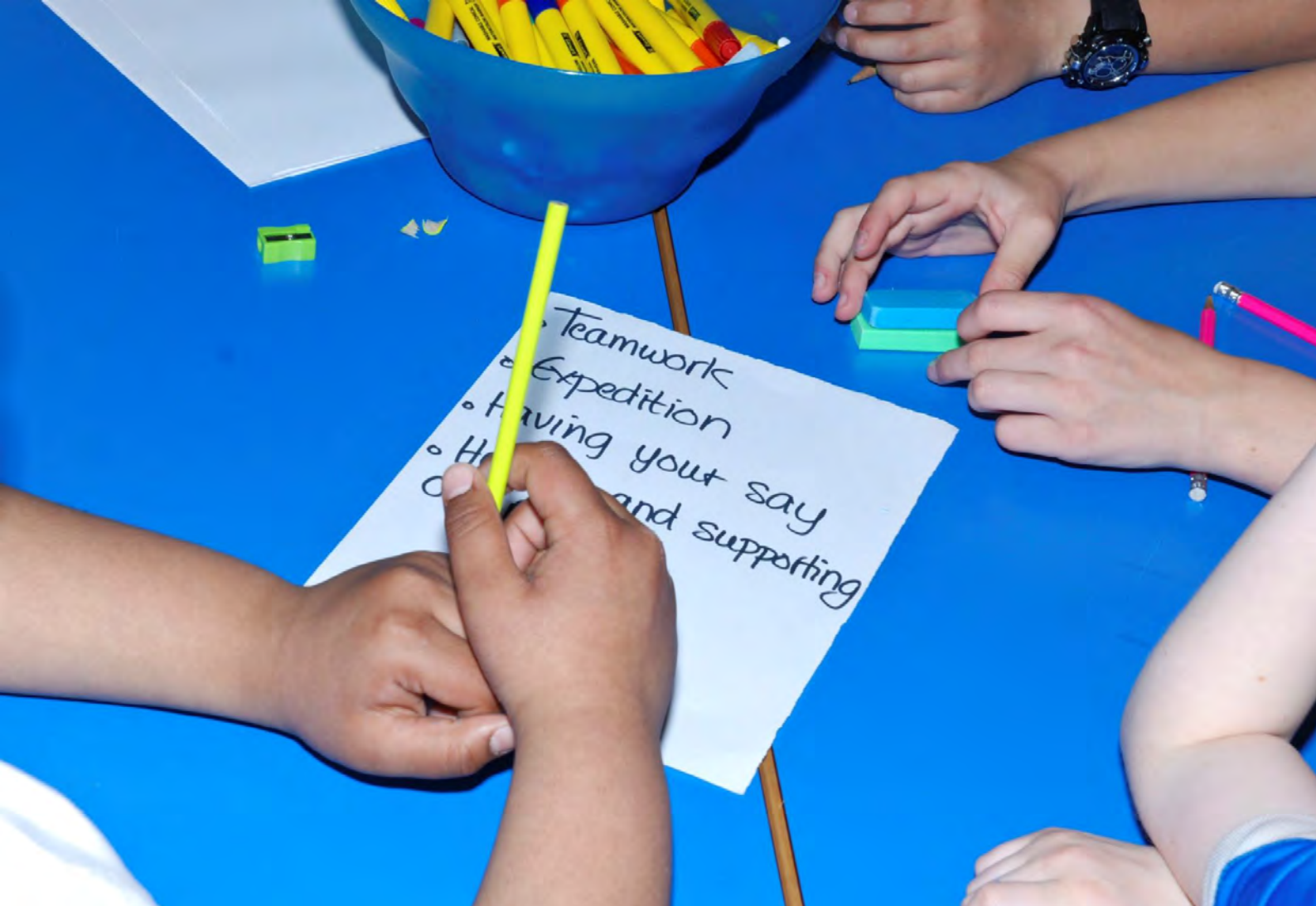
- Including all children
- Working with small groups, with a high ratio of adults to children
- Making enough time to allow ideas to unfold and deepen

- Adapting activities and pace to the needs of individual children and groups
- Using a range of creative arts as a way of exploring and expressing ideas and feelings
- Creating structure and boundaries and then allowing freedom within these.

We can conceptualise the Children's Parliament as a space:

When children come into this space we want them to bring with them their knowledge of what it is like to be a child, their ideas and their opinions, and to be willing to voice and explore them.

When adults come into this space we want them to bring with them their facilitation skills, their commitment to listen to and welcome children's opinions and a belief that children have a high degree of talent and ability. We also want adults to bring their memories of what it was like to be a child.



"The most
important part ... is
the friendship"

P7 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback

When children work together in this space they have the opportunity to take responsibility and work in self-directed groups. They also develop friendships and gain new insights into the diversity of children's backgrounds, experiences, hopes and dreams.

When adults and children work together in this space they create something both rich and challenging. There is the opportunity to form relationships of mutual trust, respect and honesty, and there is huge potential for adults to learn and gain insights from children and vice versa.

The key benefits of implementing a Human Rights Approach include:

- Promoting the realisation of Human Rights and helping government and their partners to achieve their Human Rights commitments
- Increasing and strengthening the participation of local communities
- Improving transparency
- Promoting results in health and wellbeing
- Increasing accountability
- Reducing vulnerabilities by focusing on inequalities
- Human Rights based programmes have greater impact on norms and values and are more likely to lead to sustainable change



“We can learn
from our young
people”

Teacher

What we delivered

Questionnaire-based research was conducted with 150 local children and young people in P7 and S1, exploring themes of change and transition at school, home and in the community.

The results of the questionnaire were used to design a bespoke, whole-class workshop which we delivered with 132 children in 4 schools, facilitated in 18 groups.

CPD was delivered for school staff from all participating schools, exploring the role of children's Rights in education and giving an introduction to the project.

A one day induction programme brought together the 16 referred Mural Artists selected from the 4 local schools.

A week-long intensive arts project was created where we invested over 900 people-hours to create a large-scale mural.

Over 50 people were brought together to celebrate the success of the project and to witness the unveiling of the mural.

A further workshop was delivered to school-based staff to help decode the mural and consider ways to bring it to life through the school curriculum.

Questionnaire
based research
with 150
students

18 small-group
workshops
with 132
students in 4
schools

Induction day
for 16 Mural
Artists

5-Day intensive
arts project

Training for
local teaching
staff

Celebration
Event for over
50 guests

How do children describe themselves?



Questionnaires

150 students were surveyed prior to the whole class workshops. Local Youth Services Staff facilitated whole classes to complete the survey during the school day. This allowed staff to introduce students to the project and the forthcoming workshops and enabled staff to support any students who needed assistance with the questionnaire. All surveys were then processed at Children's Parliament using various software and online analytical tools.

The survey was not intended to be a scientifically robust investigation. Rather, it was designed to support children to think about transitions and articulate their views which we used to flavour whole class workshops and the outline content of the mural.

The questionnaire gave us an excellent pen-picture of the children and their perceptions of transition.

The information gathered from the questionnaires was used in 3 ways:

1. To inform the development of a bespoke whole class workshop which reflected the themes that children had

identified and gave them the chance to discuss these thoughts and feelings in a safe environment.

2. Word clouds were generated to capture the diversity of ideas. Children involved in painting the mural used these word clouds to inspire them and prompt ideas to reflect the myriad of feelings experienced by themselves and their peers.
3. Where pupils expressed issues of notable concern, the school was alerted to these concerns and was able to respond accordingly. Of the pupils who completed the survey, 6 pupils expressed issues that concerned staff who were processing the surveys.

What thoughts do children have about moving school?



When asked to identify words that described themselves, students mostly saw themselves in a positive light with key personal strengths:

Friendly	(75.4%)
Fun	(69.2%)
Hard working	(56.9%)
Caring	(49.2%)
Brave	(43.8%)
Confident	(43.8%)

Fewer students identified more challenging qualities:

Scared	(43.8%)
Sad	(4.6%)
Angry	(4.6%)
Lonely	(2.3%)

The most important people in children's lives are:

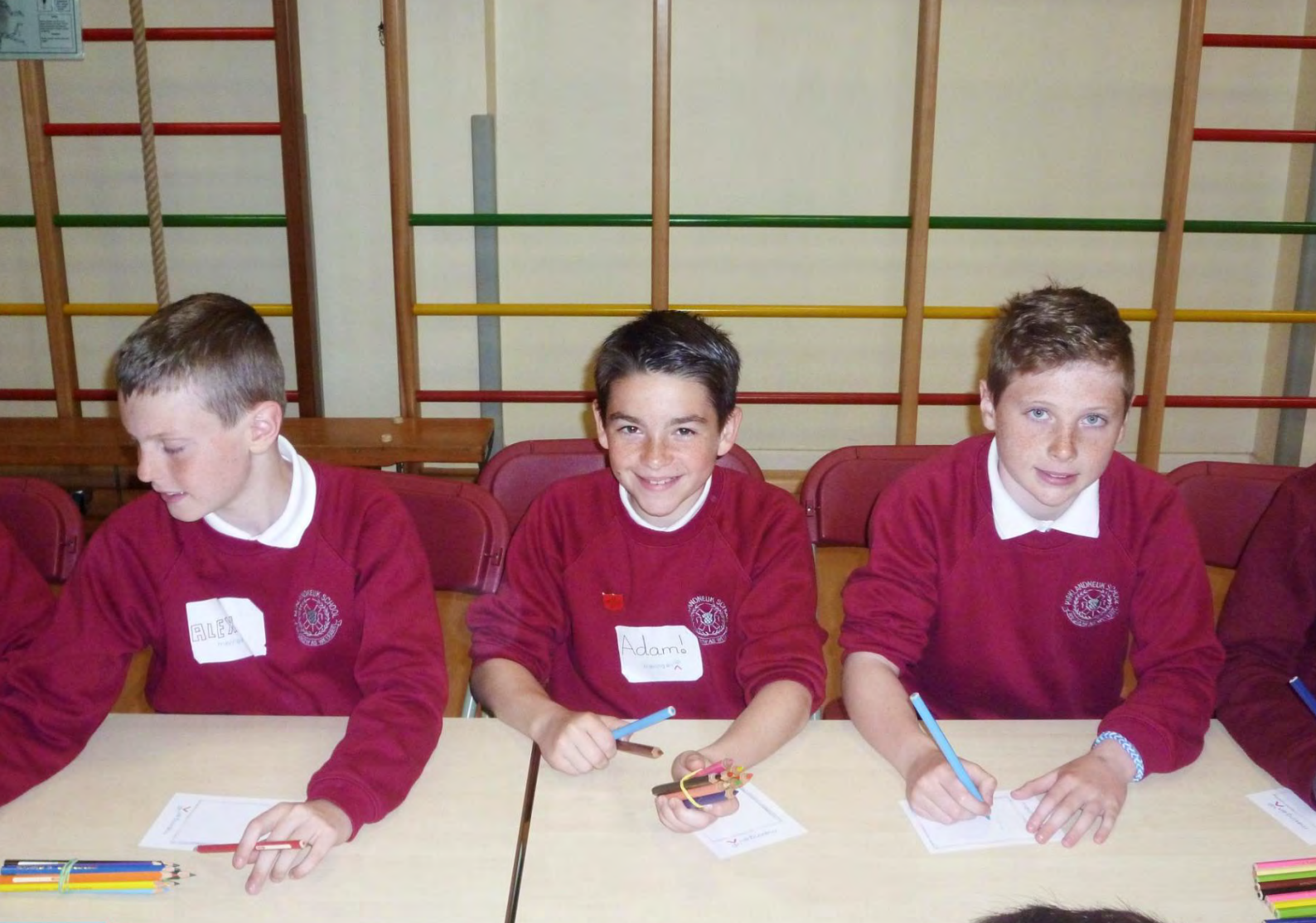
Best friends	(96.2%)
Parents or carers	(94.6%)
Brothers and sisters	(82.3%)
Extended Family	(80.8%)
Classmates	(70.0%)

Key words that pupils used to explain why these people are important emphasise the essence of healthy relationships:

Support me
Love me
Funny
Care for me
Always there for me
Looks after me
Understanding
We play together
Help me
I trust them
They give me courage

Key words used to describe thoughts and feelings when moving school included a more mixed picture:

Glad
Nervous
Worried and excited
Scared
It will be fun
Can't wait
Buzzing
Happy
Will I get lost?
Hoping to meet new people
It will be fine
We'll love it
Freaked Out!
Can't wait
It will be a new start
Nervous but happy



“Be kind was the
most important
idea I heard today”

P7 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback

Class Workshops

Based on what children told us in their questionnaire, we created a 1-day workshop for all P7 pupils to participate in. We resourced each school with sufficient staff to work with children in small groups of 10 in order that children were able to express themselves, be heard, and learn from each other. One class of S1 pupils also took part in the workshop from the position of people who had already moved into high school.

In recognition of children telling us that they were mostly excited and looking forward to high school, whilst still feeling nervous, we created an opportunity for children to:

- Reflect on past changes in their lives and affirm the success with which they had managed these changes
- Identify the thoughts and feelings associated with change
- Look forward to imminent change associated with moving school and the resulting thoughts and feelings

- Identify where or in what circumstances they may need help and who could provide it
- Identify the strengths and talents each child has to help themselves.

A team of staff from Children's Parliament and Youth Services delivered this workshop and teachers were invited to be present and observe their children working and sharing ideas.

Each group worked with a pack of 52 cards that had been designed to facilitate the discussion and to prompt children to create images to illustrate their ideas. It was these images that were then used to inform the creation of the mural.



transition/change

Excited and Nervous

leaping into the future

people who support us

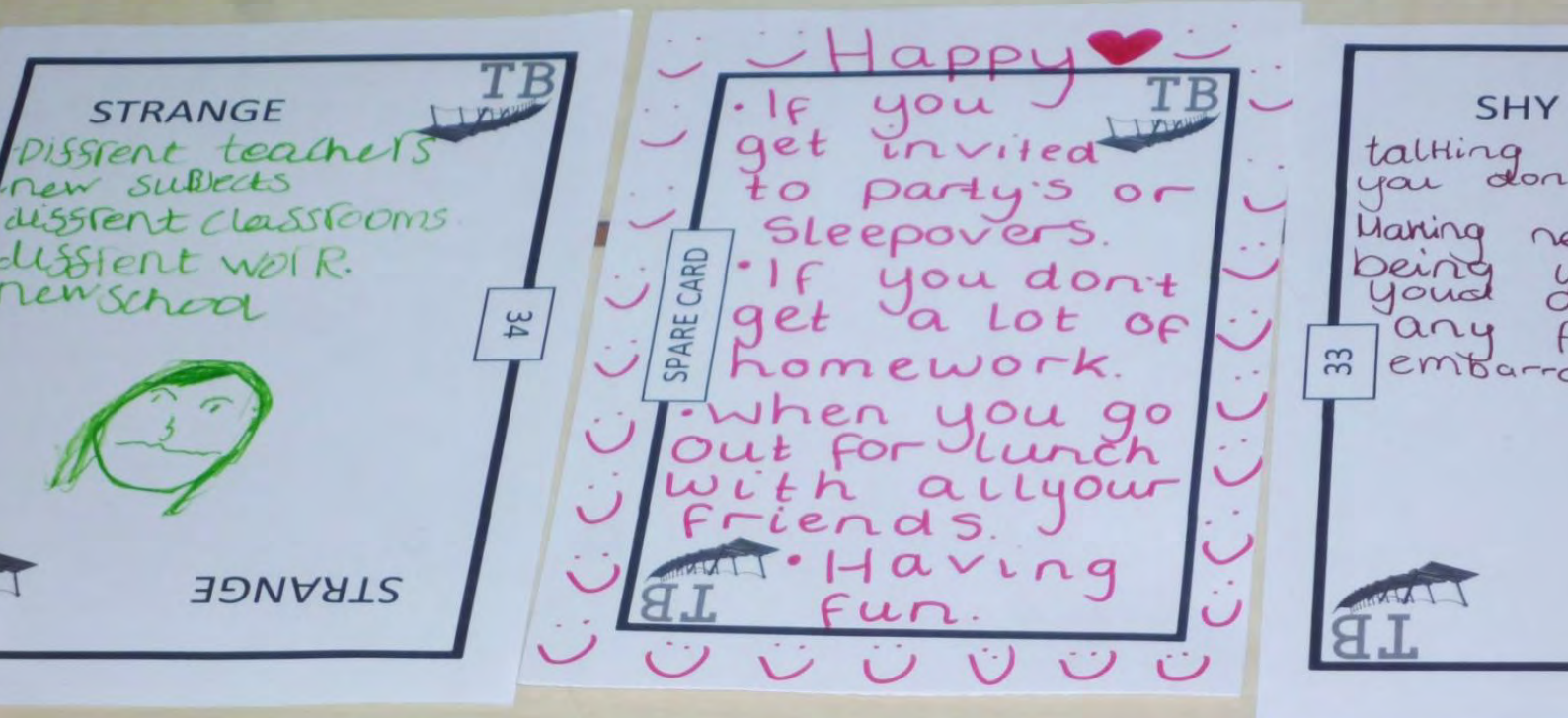
Some challenges

"Change isn't always
bad, most of the time
it's for the good"

P7 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback

"Talk about your problems"

P7 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback



Student feedback from Whole Class Workshops:

"All the skills I need can be developed"

P7 Pupil

Whole Class Workshop Feedback

67% of children
felt more
confident about
the future after
the workshop

78% of pupils felt
the activities
helped them to
respect other
people

93% of pupils
enjoyed
working with
other people



93% of pupils
had fun in the
workshop

70% of pupils felt
the way we
worked helped
them to express
themselves

84% of pupils
felt listened to
and respected

“Always respect what
others are feeling as well
as yourself”

P7 Pupil
Whole Class Workshop Feedback

"I was really nervous about going to high school but this has really calmed me down. I loved working as part of a team"

P7 Mural Artist

Selection of Mural Artists

Following the class workshop each school was asked to select 4 pupils to be part of the team creating the mural.

Given our knowledge of how powerful such a project can be for developing confidence and overcoming personal challenges, schools were asked to consider referring children who could benefit from the confidence building experience of the programme as well as students who were natural leaders, those with artistic skills and those who had experienced significant challenges in recent times. As a result, the team we formed were a diverse group with a wealth of skills and experiences as well as a range of personal goals.

To support the children we put in place a multi-agency team of artists, youth workers, an arts technician and a project manager.

"I feel much more confident because people have encouraged me with really hard challenges and I've succeeded"

P7 Mural Artist



“People can
encourage me”

P7 Pupil

Mural Preparation Day

Before we embarked on the task of creating the mural, time was spent building our team.

A day was set aside for students and the project team to come together and start to get to know one-another.

The 4 students selected from Renfrew High School were supported to take a leadership role during this day. Through facilitating name games and helping to consolidate creative ideas, these S1 pupils developed skills around communication and leadership.

By lunchtime everyone in the project team sported a project T Shirt, personalised with their own names and eye-catching designs. The process of transferring images from paper to cloth was to come in useful as the project progressed; the same technique would be used time and again to take images generated in the whole class workshops and transfer them onto the mural. Without realising it, the team were starting to acquire the skills of a Mural Artist.

Before the end of this team building day, the children had settled on the visual representation of the central metaphor of the mural – a bridge.

The bridge was seen as a means of progress and transition, a support, a structure to take you places, enabling movement from the past to the future, something to keep you above the torrents below, a signifier of safety and security.



Mural Week

For 5 days, the project team came together to create the mural.

Separate spaces were created for quiet reflection, team discussion, generating new ideas, refuelling body and mind, and of course a massive area for painting.

Parallel workshops facilitated by staff from Youth Services allowed children to explore key themes using puppetry and masks. These workshops generated more thinking and additional ideas to inform the mural.

But central to the whole process were the many hundreds of images that children generated during the class workshops. These images provided countless metaphors and more direct representation on the theme of change: people, places, feelings, thoughts, experiences, hopes and dreams were all captured. The Mural Artists' challenge was to filter, group, analyse and reproduce as many ideas from their peers as they possibly could.

It is these images and more that were developed over 6 wooden panels.





The Mural - Panel 1

The Past

The myriad of changes that children have previously experienced are represented as a jungle of events. Beasts transport children through the jungle.

People climb seemingly insurmountable trees. Hot air balloons and futuristic jet-packs hold children aloft. A stream becomes a torrent. Blue skies signify hope.

Key messages include:

- We all have the right to feel safe
- We all have talents to help us through
- Look at the changes we have coped with already
- Believe in ourselves
- Things get better
- We have people to support us
- Stay strong
- It's good to do new things
- We are all amazing in our own way

The Mural - Panel 2

Starting the Journey

As we begin our journey emotions are mixed.

Dangerous beasts lurk in the depths of the torrent. Dolphins carry travellers forward. Groups of people look unsure.

A swimmer takes her chances in the water whilst a helicopter is ready to hoist people to safety. A dancer takes a leap of faith and friends encircle a globe.

Key messages include:

- We can offer our friendship to find support
- Mixed emotions at this stage are quite normal
- Love and trust are crucial elements of enabling relationships
- Teachers have a helicopter view of events to keep children safe
- At some point we have to take a leap of faith if we are to move forward
- Sometimes we go backwards before moving forwards
- Other students who have experienced change can be very helpful and reassuring

The Mural - Panel 3

On the Bridge

As children find themselves in the midst of their journey expressions change and optimistic smiles emerge.

The supports of the bridge carry the ongoing emotions of travellers moving towards the central tower.

The 'monster of challenges' is still visible in the river beneath, and above children shout out words of hope and encouragement.

Dry land is visible and a pontoon offers a safe route out of the waters.

As characters climb a ladder skywards, the hand of friendship reaches out.

Key messages include:

- Despite our fears, things often work out
- Understanding and naming our emotions can give us strength
- Friends can offer words of encouragement
- Some people can feel very isolated
- There are often lots of unknowns when we go through change



The Mural - Panel 4

On the Bridge

More smiles emerge as children pass the half-way mark.

Jet packs continue to hold a boy in the air.

A rescue boat is on hand to pull people from the water. The suitcases on the boat reassure swimmers of the help at hand.

Faces that were once full of anguish start to smile and celebrate.

A girl holds a flag declaring it's a **New Dawn, New Day**

Key messages include:

- We can often pull ourselves back up after we fall
- Guidance teachers have a range of things they can do to support students
- Relationships naturally change over time
- Love and friendships remain central
- As we get older and journey through life, our friendships can get stronger

The Mural - Panel 5

Nearing the end

The sense of elation becomes more apparent as pigs fly, jet packs continue to fire and children beam with pride.

Some are still in the water but a submarine has a spotlight on their troubles and is ready to assist.

A boy does the impossible and rides an improbably high unicycle thanks to the help of friends shouting words of encouragement.

The end is in sight.

Key messages include:

- Students need to know that teachers have a spotlight on bullying
- Words of encouragement help to keep us afloat
- Learning new skills helps to make us more resilient
- Being able to celebrate our successes adds to our confidence
- Children need a supportive classroom environment to feel safe

The Mural - Panel 6

The Future

In a land of abundance children sit beneath the trees, relaxed and fulfilled.

They have learnt from their journey and are ready to share with others. The trees that give them shade are supporting new life and new beginnings.

Mythical birds take flight and carry forward the hopes and dreams of the travellers.

Key messages include:

- We all have the right to a safe place where we feel relaxed and calm
- Being connected to nature helps to make us feel relaxed and healthy
- It is important for us to have hopes and dreams and for us to believe they can be realised
- Journeys can be long and challenging
- Children want to share their experiences of transition with other children – they know how helpful this can be
- When everyone supports each other, the most difficult journeys are possible

"I feel really
proud of
everyone"

P7 Mural Artist



Outcomes for Children

At the end of the Mural Week all the Mural Artists were asked a series of questions about the project and were asked to respond on a 4 point scale. We were able to give a % score for each outcome to assess the impact of the project on participants' confidence and understanding of their Rights.

The overwhelming message was that this project built confidence, reduced many of the anxieties about the transition to high school and had created something that pupils felt an enormous amount of pride in.

"This project has been important because our voices have been heard and we can be appreciated for what we have done"

P7 Mural Artist

"My
understanding of
my Rights has
increased"

Project Score:
85%

"I have been able
to express my
opinions"

Project Score:
90%

"The
environment has
been supportive"

Project Score:
100%

"I have been able to
have good
conversations with
adults from Children's
Parliament"

Project Score:
98%

"I have been able
to have good
conversations with
youth workers"

Project Score:
95%

"My understanding
of how good it is to
express my opinions
has increased"

Project Score:
92%

"I am feeling
good about
moving to high
school"

Project Score:
95%

"The project has
increased my
confidence"

Project Score:
97%

"I have
enjoyed
myself"

Project Score:
100%

"I have been able
to share the views
of other pupils"

Project Score:
90%

"The training
made me
realise the
need to listen
more to
children in
school"

Teacher

Celebration Event

In September 2014 Mural Artists and the staff team came together for one last time to showcase the work of the project. Children spoke to their invited audience of family, friends and teachers and shared their hopes and dreams for the future through the Mural.



Celebration Event Comments

Reach for
the stars!

Keep the
message
going!

Always
encourage
and give
praise

I loved the
experience –
it has helped
me move on

Ensure the
legacy of this
continues

Training for Staff

Central to the Rights Based Approach is a consideration of outcomes for Duty Bearers.

This project started with a training session for local teaching staff, to support them to consider the role of children's Rights within their workplace and how they help to realise a Rights Based approach through education.

The training also gave staff an opportunity to learn more about the project at the outset and to see examples of previous work using similar methodologies.

Throughout the session teachers were able to reflect on their own practice. For some this was an affirmation of an approach they already value.

For others it was a chance to think of how they may change their practice.

Feedback from participants helps us to understand the impact of this training on those who support the participating children on a day-to-day basis.



Feedback from Teachers

"It made me
think more of
the child's
viewpoint"

"It will help me
to understand
why some
children will act
in the way they
do"

"Interesting ideas
as to how I
approach
transitions in other
aspects of school
life"

"It made me think about the way we tackle difficult topics with children"

"Children have great opportunities to share thoughts and opinions where I work ... which is reassuring"

"It is really important that we try to listen to the views of children in our care and include them in important decision making which will affect them"

"Children have a voice and are aware of everything going on"



We're
taking a
giant leap

Recommendations

1. The Mural should have a permanent home within a high profile social area within Renfrew High School
2. Children's Parliament should provide a further training session for local teaching staff to support them to think about how to maximise the impact of the mural within the curriculum
3. Each primary school should be provided with a large-scale reproduction of the mural to support future transitions
4. Mural Artists now at Renfrew High School should be supported locally to engage with current P7 pupils to articulate the messages within the mural as part of future transitions work
5. Children's Parliament and Renfrewshire Council should work together to secure funding for future projects that support children's Rights and children's participation, using creative approaches, across a range of priority themes
6. Embedded with any future work between Children's Parliament and Renfrewshire Council should be the training and development of staff to embed a Rights Based Approach across education services



Children's Parliament
Summerhall
1 Summerhall Place
Edinburgh
EH9 1PL

0131 558 9030
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