

# Cultural Education Partnership: Create Reading

## Impact Report

### Background

The Cultural Education Partnership: Create Reading is a network of over 50 organisations. Working in partnership as the CEP in Reading, to protect young people's right, as defined by UNICEF, to access the arts and creative programming, champion and demonstrate the importance of the arts as a core part a young person's development, achieve more cultural discussion and collaboration across organisations and sectors to create activity for children and young people in Reading.

*Please note that this impact report only covers the work that was funded through the CEP and does not include partner work or their impact on the wider community.*

### High level figures for April 2024 to 2025

Worked with 2973 children  
and young people

Partnering with 25 schools  
across the borough

Raised an additional  
£32,500 from funders

Work delivered by 15  
creative practitioners

## Overview of Projects funded through the CEP

Last year (April 2024 to April 2025) the CEP raised funds and supported several projects delivered by Cultural Organisations and partners.

These projects were funded by and delivered in partnership with:

- The RBC Community Safety Team - £10k
- Arts Council England - £2.5k
- Aspire2 - £2.5k
- Arts Work - £2.5k
- Shared Prosperity Funding - £15k

The projects were all co-created with young people, schools and arts organisations. Each contributor was asked to share with the delivery team what they find are the biggest challenges facing young people.

The answers to the question were as follows:

- Sense of identity
- Belonging in the context of the school and their community
- County lines
- Online risks
- Future opportunities

Based on the information we received from key stakeholders we designed and delivered or supported the following activity:

Delivered and Funded:

1. CODE
2. Shout about you
3. Fake News Workshops
4. Henry I Workshop
5. Creative Lives in South Reading - Creative Workshops in Schools

Supported and/or were key partners:

6. Creative Pathways Jobs Fair
7. Online Safety Forum
8. George Freeman History and Archives Project

## CODE



Delivery of CODE performance, warning young people of the dangers of county lines and carrying knives, how to recognise the signs and how to get help if they need it. Identifying safe adults and ways out.

- Total of 8 schools and 694 year 6 and 7s reached through the schools events in South Reading, Southcote and Oxford Road (reaching a total of 1027 over the 4 performances)
- Further 3 schools and 195 year 6 and 7 students reached through 1 full day of workshops in South Reading
- Each child was given a card with a QR code, which would take them to a website where they can get help and explore the topic in more detail
- 77% said their knowledge of county lines, knife crime and drugs improved as a result of watching the show
- 79% said it was important or very important to discuss this topic at school
- 12% said that they have been affected by county lines or knife crime (this was 33% in one of the schools)
- 77% said that they would recommend this show to other schools
- 94% said that they had learned to spot the signs of county lines as a result of the show and/or workshop

Comments from the students:

- *I will always remember my experience as fun and very educational*
- *maybe you should tell as much schools as possible so they're safe as well*
- *to make this a movie so older people can watch it*
- *I now know what do to with county lines*

When asked what they learned:

- *how to be safe from county lines knife crime and child exploitation*
- *how to discuss about county lines and to not be involved*

## Shout about you

Commissions on belonging and identity co-created with all WEC schools, to address biggest challenge for local teachers in creating community and engaging young people in school.

- Funded through Aspire2, Arts Council England and Shared Prosperity Funding
- Working with Dance Reading, Jelly, Risc, Alice Creates
- Working with 6 schools and reaching 320 students

### *Jelly*

Jelly worked with Blagdon Nursery, 80 3 year olds shared what makes them unique in a poster series.

- <https://youtu.be/czNqi4uLEnA>

### *Dance Reading*

Dance Reading worked with Christ the King and The Ridgeway with 35 young people to create a dance that represented that own unique self.

What the children said about it:

- "I don't normally dance at home but I dance here, cos I'm not really a dancer, I don't know how to dance but when I come here I'm really good at it, and now I have passion for it."
- "It makes me feel like energetic and very like it just gives me something to do"
- "I've enjoyed just being with my friends, being able to participate"
- "It made me feel free like, nothing's around me and I'm just dancing."
- "I don't like to dance in public but this has gave me a lot of confidence"
- "I love dancing. every time when I feel sad I dance and it means I feel happy"

Member of staff - "I love that you included every child, even those with learning disabilities and physical disabilities and just celebrated the way they moved already, without trying to make them move differently. It means that the children who are always getting told to sit still were free to run around, and it was celebrated and turned in to something we all applauded."

- This is what they created (a shortened version of it):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vGyWgs1GsC0>

### *RISC*

Risc worked with Whitley Park and New Christ Church and 175 pupils over 3 weeks. Discovering what it means to be from Whitley, what it means to be part of their schools and what is beautiful, unique and quirky about themselves. They created 6 banners which will be shared round the schools.



### *Alice Creates*

Alice Creates worked with 30 students from John Madejski, which ended in a fantastic performance at the University of Reading with an audience of 40 parents, teachers and funders. They wrote monologues about what it was like to belong, one of the biggest factors in their journey of belonging was friendship. They create a recipe for friendship, shared their cultural dances and then all danced to Mama Mia!

Evaluation for this strand of work is still ongoing, the arts organisations plan to develop the work around belonging and identity and apply for more funding to continue to deliver work in Reading.

### *Fake News Workshops*

Fake, Extremism and Truth Workshop delivered to 466 students Year 5 and Year 6 from 6 schools in Reading. Feedback has been excellent so far.

### *Creative Pathways Jobs Fair*

Click [here](#) for a video of the event.

Creative Pathways event held at Green Park Conference Centre.

Hosted over 650 students from 15 schools from across Reading.

There were panel events, where experts spoke about their experience and gave their top tips for getting into the industry. There were workshops on stage combat, green screen, creative writing for wellbeing, how to prepare for an audition, script writing, directing and a chance to try a whole host of careers including dj'ing, Virtual Reality, animation, make up artistry, costume designing, community activating, music composing, stage design and more with experts in their fields to inspire.

There was a quiet hour for neurodivergent young people and representatives from underrepresented voices in the creative industries to speak about their experiences.



Feedback from schools has now been collated, relating to the Creative Skills Job Fair:

<b>Before attending the job fair did you know about how many types of jobs there are in the creative industries?</b>	
Knew a little about the jobs or no, I didn't realise there were so many jobs	51%
<b>What is your interest in creative careers?</b>	
Already interested or still exploring	84%
<b>Was the job fair helpful?</b>	
yes, very helpful or somewhat helpful	92%
<b>Are you likely to choose a job now?</b>	
yes, very likely or somewhat likely	71%
<b>would you recommend?</b>	
Yes, or maybe depending on event	95%

Feedback
bigger space/map
more activities/jobs
Favourites
sounds design and composing, DJing, Make Up, Animation, Acting/Theatre, Editing & Scriptwriting

Quotes from young people:

*Thing that I enjoyed the most – is that I found out I could be a DJ.*

*That I could be creative and that there are no limits.*

*That I could interact.*

*The people were so creative and kind.*

*I enjoyed meeting people in the industry and finding out more about their jobs.*

## Henry I Workshop

Julia Titus aka Ma Bessie a former teacher developed a workshop to deliver to schools based on the life of Henry I.

The workshop explored the fascinating reign of Henry 1st, the first Norman King of England through song (think Horrible Histories!). Julia based the learning around a song that she had created for the anniversary of the Abbey Ruins construction and reworked it to a reggae beat.

Julia worked with EP Collier to deliver the workshop and develop it. She worked with 60 children in total, she hopes to further develop the concept for the 1000 Anniversary of William the Conqueror in 2027.

## Creative Lives in South Reading - Creative Workshops in Schools

### Online Safety Forum

The Online Safety summit was held in November at the Town Hall in Reading. It attracted strong press attention, the involvement of four national charities and involvement of both Museum and creatives. The output is best summed up in the below illustration created by the Ellie an illustrator from 'Lim'.



## George Freeman – History, Creative Writing and Graphic Novel Project



A history project uncovered unexpected diversity in the parish of Turville.

The project, led by the University of Reading and the Royal Berkshire Archives, used research into old records to tell the hidden history of ethnic diversity in rural England and how it is relevant today.

The project built on earlier work by history PhD student Graham Moore, to search parish records for evidence on the lives of ethnically diverse individuals.

Mr Moore uncovered the story of an African boy, named in the archives as George Freeman, who was taken by the Royal Navy from a Portuguese slave ship off Sierra Leone, and brought to England in 1812, aged 11.

Funding from the University's Community Engagement Fund allowed the University and the Archives to commission creative work based on George's short life.

Illustrator Euan Cook and poet Maisie Crittenden joined University and Archives staff to run sessions for students at The Forest School, Winnersh, The Bulmershe School and King's Academy Easthampstead Park.

[History project reveals diversity in the parish of Turville | Reading Chronicle](#)

[Full article: Finding George Freeman: a 'Liberated African' in Berkshire in the Age of Abolition](#)