



darts

creative classrooms

Creative Classrooms is a drama-based, immersive storytelling programme, proven to be successful in supporting Doncaster children in developing communication skills, improving confidence, listening and retaining information.

The challenge

Creative Classrooms was created in Doncaster and designed specifically in response to challenges identified by teachers in Doncaster primary schools. Their concerns are shared by others across the region and throughout the UK, where there is significant evidence of a national crisis in children's mental health. (ADCS Report on Children's Mental Health, Nov 2022, CYP Mental Health by Health and Social Care Committee, Dec 2021:

https://adcs.org.uk/assets/documentation/ADCS_Safeguarding_Pressures_Phase_8_Special_Thematic_Report_on_Mental_Health_Final_Nov2022.pdf

These challenges include:

- Low emotional resilience amongst children
- Children's fear of risk, which negatively impacts learning
- Difficulty in understanding, expressing and managing emotions
- Low level skills in communication
- Underdeveloped listening skills, and ability to retain information

"We love it when we get to talk about our feelings, there's always time for how I'm feeling."

Primary School Pupil

"The artist took time to get to know each of the children and uses this to support every child to succeed and thrive. I have seen children who were very reluctant to talk and join in with class activities participate, engage and communicate their ideas and feelings."

Teacher

Creative Classrooms

darts developed Creative Classrooms with thirteen primary schools across Doncaster over three years. The programme was designed in partnership with Elaine Burke, Art Therapist and specialist in child development and creativity. Our approach is rooted in darts' 30 years of experience working with children, in theories of child development and the importance of play, and is informed by the knowledge and expertise of the teachers, senior leaders, and teaching assistants we have worked with across Doncaster.

If you joined a Creative Classroom, you would see an experienced drama facilitator leading six sessions with a whole class of students, slowly and surely. Exploring one story for six weeks allows a class to immerse themselves in a new world where they can make mistakes, explore characters' differing emotions, and imagine alternative endings.

"The sessions have been adapted for our students, on the spot and in advance, based on the needs of my children on the day. All the children in my class have had the opportunity to have a voice and feel heard."

Teacher

Creative Classrooms support schools in developing a whole-school approach to creativity, wellbeing and understanding ourselves. We also share key techniques with teaching staff through regular Continuing Professional Development (CPD) sessions so staff can continue to build a creative classroom themselves.

“It has been really well delivered and the children have absolutely loved it. I have been impressed with the way that the sessions have built up and the children have been totally on board and engaged.”

Teacher

Creative Classrooms uses its unique ‘slow storying’ approach to help children understand:

- **Self:** Understanding myself and my feelings.
- **Relationships and Empathy:** Understanding other people and making friends.
- **Curiosity:** Trying new things through exploring and taking risks, building resilience.
- **Feeling Calm:** Finding ways into feeling calm, creating boundaries.
- **Choose What You Do:** Agency, having power and ownership.

Each of these areas of focus are directly tied to Erikson’s theory of psychosocial development, developing key building blocks for children, and helping them to thrive. Teachers can choose which focus best supports their class’s development.

“In Creative Classrooms it’s play, but it’s important!”

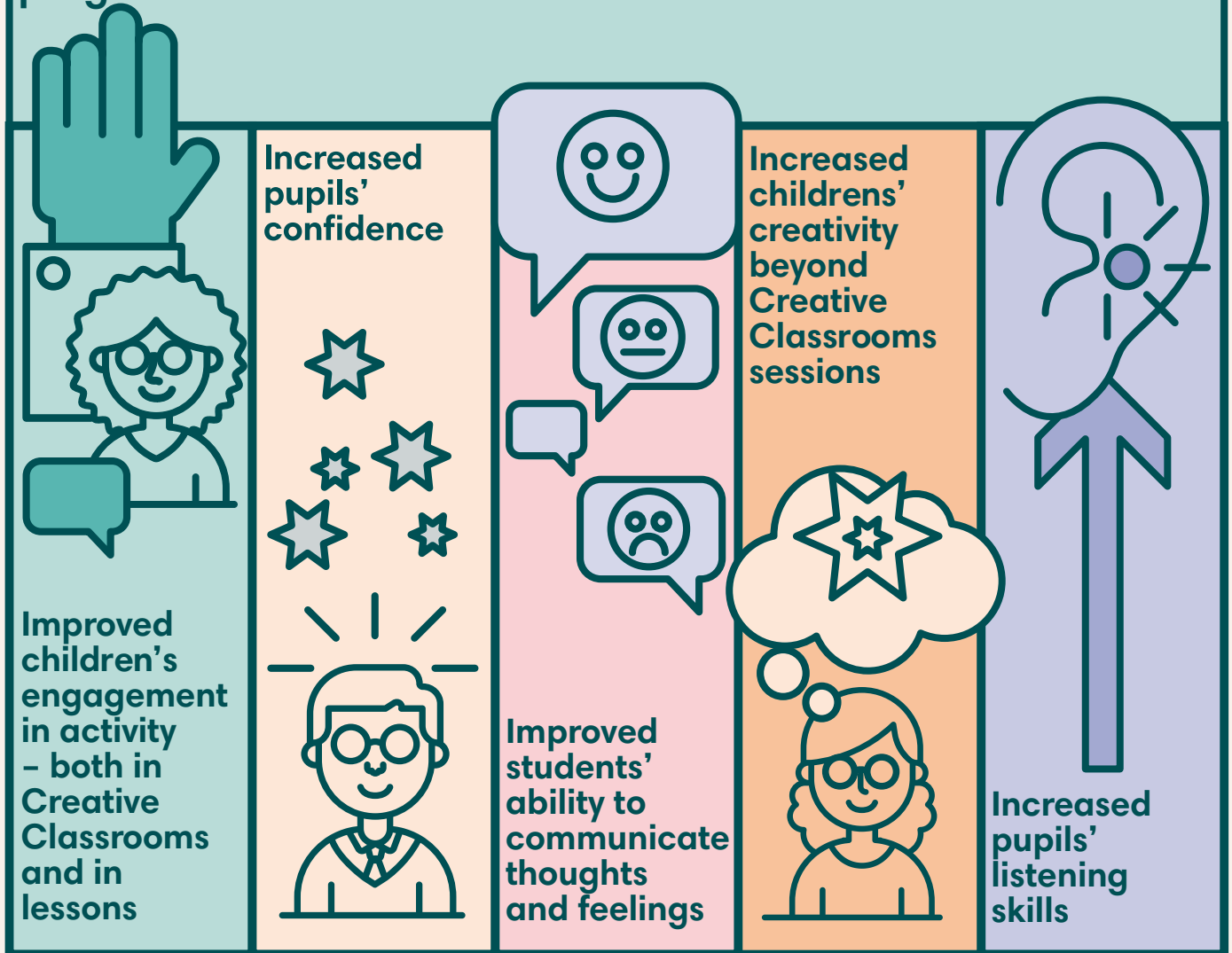
Primary School Pupil

“Our children have loved the sessions and during parents’ consultations, the parents talked about this as well.”

Teacher

The impact of Creative Classrooms

Since 2020, Creative Classrooms has worked with 13 Doncaster primary schools and 60 teachers. Five schools have worked with us for three years. For children, the programme has:



“It has been a pleasure to join in and witness the children grow in their articulation and expression of thoughts, ideas and feelings...

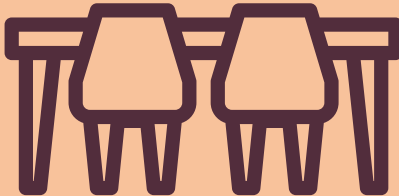
To see some of the children become more confident has been amazing, and this has then transferred to other areas too.”

Teacher

“We are excited to implement these inspiring techniques. With such exemplary practice to model our own approaches to teaching drama, to develop emotional literacy, a love of story, vocab acquisition - the future looks wonderful!”

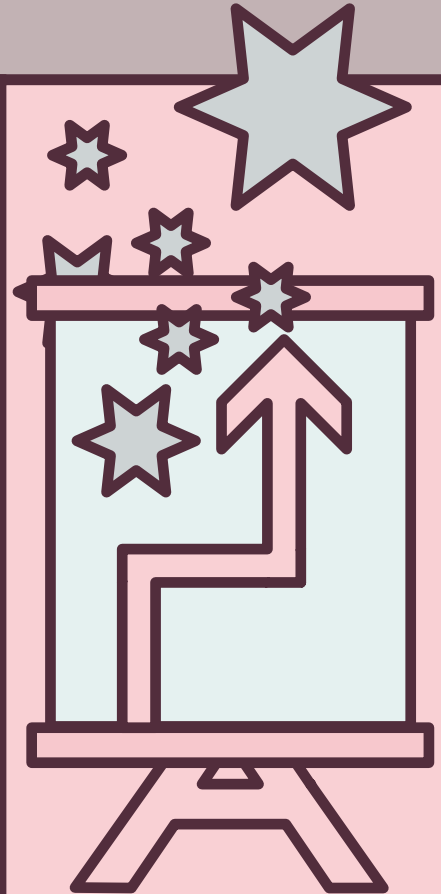
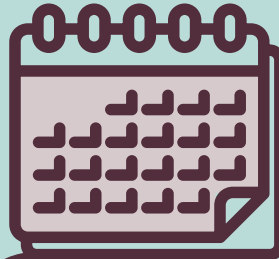
Teacher

Creative Classrooms has also turbo-boosted teacher skills and CPD:



Increased teachers' understanding of the benefits of using drama in their classrooms

Increased teachers' regular use of drama in their classrooms



Increased teachers' confidence in using drama to explore the curriculum and other important work outside of the curriculums

For more information please contact sarah@wearedarts.org.uk or call 01302 341662.

Creative Classrooms in your school

Creative Classrooms delivers 32 weeks of the programme in a school year, and dedicates a half term to each year group:

- 32 weekly workshops – 6 per half-term for each of the 2 classes in a year group
- regular meetings with teachers and senior leaders to oversee progress
- termly Continuing Professional Development (CPD), tailored to your staff and delivered in school

The cost is £7500 for a school year.

To explore how Creative Classrooms could support your school, please contact Sarah–Director (Arts and Education) at sarah@wearedarts.org.uk or on 01 302 493844.

Taster Offer

If you would like a taster of Creative Classrooms, we can provide:

- 12 weekly sessions over a half term – 6 sessions with two classes in one year group
- a Continuing Professional Development (CPD) session for staff to utilise some of the initial learning

The cost is £1575 for the Taster Offer.

If you like this model and cannot afford these costs, together we can apply for funding for Creative Classrooms in your school. We have an excellent success rate with this work.

“The best thing about Creative Classrooms is I get to show what I’m good at.”

Primary School Pupil