

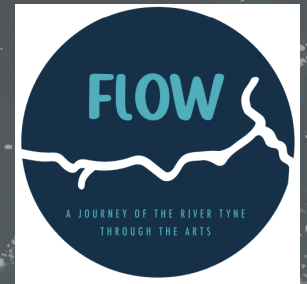
Flow Project - [Carly Frame](#), Ponteland Primary School

"Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress, and working together is success." Henry Ford

Vision

The Flow Project is designed to give children across the Pele Trust the opportunity to explore, create and express the journey of the River Tyne through the Arts. Flow aims to:

- Share knowledge, skills and experience in order to better develop young artists
- Elevate the profile of the Arts within our schools.
- Celebrate our children within the wider community.
- Highlight the Pele Trust as a flagship Trust through the Arts.



Outline

The project follows the journey of the River Tyne using its story to explore and inspire across the Arts. Schools can weave Flow through as much or as little of each school curriculum as is deemed appropriate. Participating schools have been offered:

- Workshops in artistic disciplines and musical performance led by specialist staff
- Half-termly check-ins and ongoing support throughout the school year
- Support from the High School Art and Media departments

The project will culminate in a week-long exhibition held in the Sports Hall at Ponteland Leisure Centre in July 2023. This will include video recordings of dance performances, recorded musical compositions and either a collaborative or individual piece of artwork from each child in each year group.



Challenges

The scope of the project, working across five primary schools and one secondary school has brought with it a number of challenges. Specifically, I have needed to negotiate how to engage with each school in a meaningful way, gather the support of senior management from each of the schools, mobilise and encourage subject leads and partnering with smaller schools with limited budgets and resources.

Flow seeks to be a collaborative project including developing links outside of the trust, for example with Newcastle University's Fine Art Department. Many lessons have been learned about how to manage expectations, keep the confidence of partnerships and how to communicate effectively to achieve the intended outcomes.



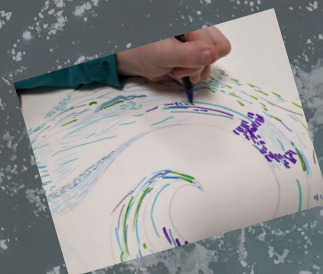
Progress

At the outset of the project it was clear that I would need to develop a network of arts leads. Network meetings were set up with opportunities to work together as subject leads and also within specific art forms. These meetings have taken place twice termly, with a shared drive created to enable collaborative working documents and resources. We used Exploring Nine Influence Strategies (Hay Group) to help understand the existing coalition of skills within the trust and to highlight the gaps in provision and networking opportunities.



We have developed cultural partnerships beyond the trust to further develop the resources and opportunities available to pupils. This began by building on established links with Newcastle University with whom we have previously run a series of placements for Fine Art students. We have now developed a partnership with the Institute for Creative Arts Practice <https://www.ncl.ac.uk/creativearts/>. This has resulted in:

- Access to specialist staff at the School of Arts and Cultures at Newcastle University, Media and Film Department, Sound Technicians and The Communication and Marketing Team.
- Key Stage One music workshops for all of our Primary Schools, led by Dr Julia Partington
- Seven undergraduate art students placed across four of our Primary Schools, who are assisting, planning and delivering art lessons
- An additional undergraduate student who is embarking on her own collaboration in line with her studio practice, producing work through drawing the children's movements as they rehearse and perform.
- A full day workshop with sound recordist David De La Haye and Rob McKay, Senior Lecturer in Composition where a small group of children from across our Primary and High Schools will go 'pond dipping' with underwater microphones and then work in Newcastle University Sound Lab to develop compositions.
- A paid internship developed in collaboration with Dr Gayle Meikle, Senior Lecturer of Contemporary Art Curation for undergraduate students which will aid schools with the hanging of their students' work and will also provide a team of people to help to curate the work in the exhibition space.
- Funding via the Creative Institute for Arts Practice for an internship for a Postgraduate Student, Vyshakh Thaliyil to work with our project for sixty hours. This will allow us to film and edit dances which have been designed and taught by a group of dance specialists drawn from across our partnership.



Impact

The most visible impact of the project will be the public exhibition in July. This will showcase the 'quality and variety of what children (and adults) see, hear and participate in...developing their understanding, self-expression, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts' (DfE Statutory framework for the early years foundation stage 2021)



Establishing and maintaining an art network, reviewing and developing robust planning frameworks and more importantly developing our children's sense of self through the arts remains the long term aim and impact which will be evidenced through ongoing and future projects across our trust.

Personal reflections and future hopes

The vision for this project was born out of a series of conversations about how we could use the creativity and expertise of our staff to develop our arts provision across the Pele Trust. The Cultural Leadership in Education programme has provided the context in which to further conversations and develop mutually beneficial partnerships across a wide variety of people. Working with any individual or team brings with it huge complexities in relationship building, expectations and realisations and this process has taught me a great deal about developing best fit partnerships and establishing clear goals. Empowerment has been a key influence strategy throughout the project and one which feels more comfortable to me as a leadership device as it gives people a sense of agency while maintaining positive relationships. Seeing value in others and working together with a common vision sits most easily with me and as it works to build and nurture trust rather than to coerce and dictate.



Cohen's model of influencing without authority struck a chord as it from the outset of this project, leading change without any formalised authority seemed daunting. This continues to be a learning exercise and pushes me out of my comfort zone on a daily basis, however, through this process, trust has been established and that trust has empowered my leadership and has helped me to raise up other leaders too. It is my hope that what was started as a one off project will become a vehicle on which to progress arts provision for years to come.

