

Stanford Junior School	
Project title	The Recycled Sea
Project dates	20 Feb – 26 March 2018
Wellbeing issue	<p>Very high need class, with mixed needs, overall high anxiety and issues with shame. There is great difficulty in getting the class to work together well. Children struggle with fear of failure, lack of resilience, and a lack of independent thinking. Some children have low self-esteem and a lack of ambition.</p> <p>This results in children not attempting the task or over-reliance on teachers. There is a unwillingness to use tools to help themselves, and some use crying and illness as ways to get attention. They often won't work together, and are prone to not listening to each other.</p>
Age/Year group	Year 4
Number of children participating	27
Number of parents participating	0
Lead Artists/Organisation	Nikki Gunson
Lead Teacher/s	Emily Steele

Project description

The project used recycled materials to create 3D moving automatons of sea creatures. Themes around the sea, the project created talking points about waste and wastefulness in general and encouraged recycling by turn something discarded into something pretty and practical. The process brought an awareness of plastic and the hazards of not recycling, by telling the story of the devastating effect of plastic to the creatures of the sea. The project began by discovering everybody's inner Super Hero and ended with stories told with automaton sea creatures as props.

Successes

Really enjoyed superheroes week – the children said really nice things about themselves and each other, working on their own. They coped well with the independent task as it was pitched well for their ability, and this first task felt quite achievable early on. They got to take it home straight away which was good for motivation.

More collaboration is now happening in the class, and children are happier to help each other. They were proud of their creations, even if it hasn't really increased their independence. One boy went

home and made more fish from the recycling for his sister. Nikki learned a lot about how to deliver these automatons in this setting.

Outcomes

Results of children’s evaluation at the end of the project:

How you were feeling

BEFORE the project:		AFTER the project:	
Very Unhappy	0%	Very Unhappy	5%
Unhappy	10%	Unhappy	5%
Neither	25%	Neither	10%
Happy	25%	Happy	15%
Very Happy	40%	Very Happy	65%

How much you like the kind of person you are

BEFORE the project:		AFTER the project:	
Very Unhappy	5%	Very Unhappy	5%
Unhappy	5%	Unhappy	5%
Neither	20%	Neither	10%
Happy	30%	Happy	15%
Very Happy	40%	Very Happy	65%

How well you coped with challenges or difficult situations

BEFORE the project:		AFTER the project:	
Very Unhappy	5%	Very Unhappy	5%
Unhappy	25%	Unhappy	15%
Neither	20%	Neither	15%
Happy	40%	Happy	30%
Very Happy	10%	Very Happy	35%

How much you felt liked by other people

BEFORE the project:		AFTER the project:	
Very Unhappy	0%	Very Unhappy	0%
Unhappy	11%	Unhappy	0%
Neither	26%	Neither	21%
Happy	32%	Happy	42%
Very Happy	32%	Very Happy	37%

Did the adults who ran the sessions listen to you?

Not at all	A little	A lot
0%	50%	50%

Did you enjoy the sessions overall?

Not at all	A little	A lot
5%	35%	60%

Was it easy to talk to the artist you worked with?

Not at all	A little	A lot
6%	50%	44%

Did the artist and teachers know how to help you?

Not at all	A little	A lot
11%	37%	52%

Did you learn to do something new?

Not at all	A little	A lot
5%	32%	63%

What was the BEST thing about the activity?

- Making the creatures x 7
- Decorating my puppet x 2
- Using the glue guns
- Learning
- Art
- Making them move
- How I have a seagull now
- That it is all made out of plastic & recyclable materials
- I loved my eagle.
- We got to just do art without people telling you what to do
- Decorating the box
- Learning how to make it

What was the WORST thing about the activity?

- My movement wasn't working
- I felt a bit rushed x 2
- Nothing x 3
- The sticking with tape
- That it overlapped almost all my favourite lessons!

I'm REALLY bad at this sort of stuff
Decorating the boxes
Doing the work
Having to do the hard mechanics that work our machines x 2
Sometimes it was hard sticking things on and I didn't really get any help
Cutting out the bottle
Not being able to understand properly
Trying to tell the artist something
The teacher laughing at everything

Challenges

Week 2 was group discussion about sea creatures and drawing. It didn't make the connection with the superhero characteristics, and it would be good to connect that throughout looking at good personal characteristics. Nikki introduced two automata mechanisms, in hindsight would have only used one and conveyed it more clearly. They did all try, some didn't understand what they were doing and needed lots of adult help. Some mechanisms didn't work and we need that to happen.

We mixed tables to get them to work together but it hasn't manifested brilliantly. Still quite a lot of overreliance, and the ones who engaged were expected to. There was more motivation however. They looked forward to the sessions happening. One suffered anxiety over hers not working, and Nikki had to help her finish. One girl refused to change her fish so it moved, changed her mind near the end when everyone else's was moving. The final exhibition was meant to be on the wall with the whole class putting it together, but they ended up in small groups doing a performance as the wall wasn't available. This meant that there was little time to prepare and some were quite passive in the process. The original idea was less exposing for individuals and would have required whole class decisions.

Learning

It really needs templates and step by step making process for the mechanisms. Taking the superhero concept through more would also enrich the process. A return to the original idea of a whole class exhibition with a storyline would have worked much better – this does not need to be on a wall if not available, it could be displayed across the floor in the hall for visitors to walk through. Storyboards need time, perhaps using different methods to tell their stories: such as words, drawing, motions, actions. We could use simple rules such as 'everyone with a fish form a story together' 'everyone with something blue create a story about discarded fishing nets. We'd want to ensure they use their superhero characteristic in their story.