



Projects



Making connections

Projects offer broad, open-ended themes, through which children make connections between different elements of their learning. Topics include:

Culture & Community

Exploring diversity, citizenship, human values, religion and enterprise - on a local, national or global scale.

Time & Place

Investigating our heritage and the natural world. Understanding how the present has been shaped by the past.

Science & Technology

Discovering how the world works through hypothesis, investigation, experimentation and evaluation.

Sustainability

Discovering ways of living that support wellbeing without compromising the future.

Responding to children's curiosity and imagination.

Projects are a key element of the co-constructed curriculum at Lewes New School.

Based firmly in the belief that children are curious, competent and rich in potential, a project begins with no fixed outcome in mind. Learning progresses instead in response to the encounters of the group, the enquiry of each child, the exchange of ideas and the choice of expression.

A theme may be explored by small groups of children within a class, or occasionally by the whole school. A project may last a few weeks or many months, depending on the scope for exploration, discovery and learning that it offers.

The teachers' role is to facilitate this process – to model an open approach to learning, a willingness to take risks and make mistakes. Through careful listening and observation they anticipate possible directions, judge when to lead and when to travel alongside.

This year, a project emerged that sparked the curiosity and imagination of children across the whole school. But while the rest of the school may have taken inspiration from the ideas of one class, they ran with them in very different ways.

Myths & Legends

Later Years (Years 5&6)



Children devoured books and researched other sources to discover more about the genre, the myths themselves and the varied cultures from which they emerged. Children observed that some Gods and Goddesses in ancient myths and legends transcended time and place, sparking an exploration of the key themes of ancient belief systems compared to now, and a personal reflection of children's own beliefs.



Collaborative stories were drafted and published, illustrated by large-scale works of art, bringing together the characters and events from a variety of well-known and invented tales.

Mythical battle re-enactments naturally emerging in children's play were channeled, through gymnastics sessions, into choreographed movement pieces. These were filmed by children, and edited with welcome support from a parent, for the exhibition.

Middle Years (Years 3&4)



Intrigued by work shared by older children in assembly, and inspired by the book *Mythical Creatures*, these children created some mythical creatures of their own.

Some were moved to devise a series mythical 'Trump Cards' (these were a significant part of their play). Others designed board games, comic strips and puppet shows inspired by epic journeys, or created mythical objects including an intricate pair of winged sandals from paper, wood and string.



Children put themselves metaphorically into the sandals of the mythical heroes through guided visualisations and explored their senses – and the sensations of fear – through feely boxes in the classroom. Themes such as ethics and consequences were explored through Circle Time debates and creative writing in the form of diary entries and letters.

A school-wide collaborative project

Early Years (Years 1&2)

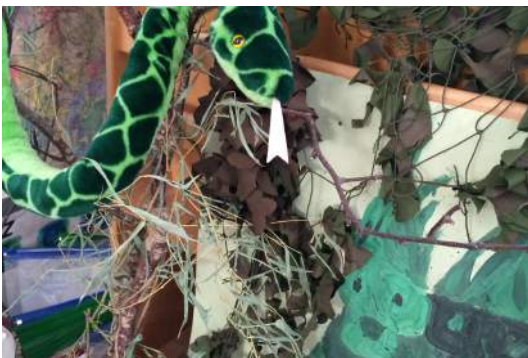


Work took a different direction, inspired in part by the nature themes depicted in the myths and legends the class read each day. Role play inspired by natural phenomena such as the changing seasons was brought to life with coloured fabric – whirls of pink, blue and gold. Children wove the characters emerging from their role play into their artwork and story-writing, while the teacher wove in concepts such as scale, sequencing and time.



The 'moral of the story' informed children's thinking about learning and play. One child re-wrote the Herculean tale so the protagonist *'gets it wrong like real people – we can't be good at everything all the time!'*. Recognising that legends held essential pearls of wisdom for their people, children embarked on a reflection into how they could support their own community – practicing 'acts of kindness' in the playground and class.

Reception & Nursery



It is rare for the youngest children in the school to stay with a single theme for the whole of a term, but weekly sharing by the other classes through assemblies kept this group inspired and bursting with ideas.

Dragons and unicorns, supercars and super bunnies all had a place in the children's imaginative play, story telling and creative expression.

At times, the class read different versions of the same story, and discussed how different writers may interpret things in different ways.

Eventually the classroom was transformed into the dark, dense entrance to the underworld, and the children put on a play.



The Exhibition

By the end of term, the school was brimming over with the stuff of myths and legends - from small clay figures to enchanted forests, Pandora's boxes to life-size gods and goddesses.

Children and teachers worked together to curate an exhibition – an 'Open House' - for parents and friends to enjoy.

Working towards a whole school exhibition in this way brings with it a sacrifice – some of the spontaneity of working creatively and 'in the flow' with young children can be lost. But it also brings tremendous learning opportunities in its own right.

Children learn to persevere in the face of a challenge and experience the rigour of working to a deadline. They learn the subtle art of negotiation as they work with their peers to decide on the perfect means of display.

Essentially, an exhibition is a celebration of the learning that can happen in a community - Ideas are shared, shaped and developed by the group.

The culmination of many weeks of hard work, the exhibition formed an integral part of the project itself - an authentic realisation of the learning process and a celebration of the children's endeavor



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