



Testimonials

Carly Marsden, Deputy Head

Carclaze Community Primary School, Cornwall

Laura managed to develop the children's academic learning about the topic, acting, singing, movement, expression and personal skills. Prior to arriving at our school, she planned the day to link with the pupils' Topic work and also incorporated English and Maths skills. She captured their attention instantly and, throughout the day, developed their imagination and creativity, whilst promoting teamwork and inclusion for all. Laura's inspiration enabled the children to offer their own ideas for the play; and she shaped these ideas into a captivating performance.

There was a real buzz amongst our year 5 pupils that day and their parents were mesmerised as their children performed with so much energy and enthusiasm. We would welcome Laura back to our school to spread her skills and talents amongst our pupils, staff and parents again; her presence had an overwhelming impact on the children's teamwork, self esteem and personal development.

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Testimonials

C.M. Coyne, Headteacher

St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School, Liverpool

Every child involved was totally engaged and on task. There was a real sense of purpose and belief in what they were enacting. So much so, this was picked up by the audience who, in turn, became engrossed. The climax was perfectly timed and left the audience cheering. Quite simply, it was the best drama workshop I have seen in 40 years of teaching.

We very much hope that Laura will continue to work with our school in the years to come. I would recommend to any school or organisation that is looking for a dynamic and hard working drama specialist with an enormous talent for working with children.

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Testimonials

Paul Jackson-Read, Headteacher

Great Malvern Primary School, Malvern, Worcestershire

Thank you for an amazing week. The energy and passion you bring to the children is brilliant. All the 130 or so children in years 4 to 6 had an amazing week they'll not forget for a long-time.

The change in the children during last week was astounding. Children who had low self esteem were dancing and children who wouldn't take the lead in anything were running backroom projects. The confidence these children have gained is invaluable. The buzz created is still with us and I've had many children and staff asking when you're returning! The parental response has also been great. I've spoken to parents for the first time who just don't usually engage with us but the nag power of their enthused children 'forced' them into the building – well done. The assemblies were brill too. The early years are still walking around the building singing African songs.

Both Laura and Peter's professionalism was superb. You're welcome back anytime.

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Testimonials

Kathryn Cockayne, Learning Co-ordinator Stradbroke Primary School, Sheffield

We have just completed one of the most memorable working weeks of my career. A “Musical in a Week” I wouldn't have thought it was at all possible to incorporate all 210 KS2 children, but with the wonderful vision of Laura Berridge and Peter Mitchell our whole school was turned into a working theatre.

Our whole school drama week was launched on the Monday with a high quality singing assembly led by Laura and Peter. This was to set the standard for the week and the children left feeling inspired.

Years 3, 4 and 5 were split into departments, they were allowed to select photography, marketing, costumes or props or set design and off they went. The Year 6 children were all actors in The Game of Life (all 53 of them!). They helped to fill in the gaps of the script so they had ownership of the show to. Peter played the tunes and together the lyrics were written – amazing! This musical was so personal to our school and our children. Laura and Peter worked tirelessly all week with the cast putting together the musical. Regular visits were made to all the departments with positive and encouraging comments made by Laura and Peter.

All the children took on their responsibilities with pride. The Year 6 children were phenomenal, they worked so hard rehearsing, learning lines, singing, giving interviews to the photographers and much much more. Every child was treated as equals and with the same amount of importance as the next.

The children are hoping they can do it again next week! It is our aim to continue our association with Arts Insight. We hope that they are able to rely on the charitable donations to enable them to grow this project and help provide such wonderful learning opportunities for many more children. They are certainly welcome back at Stradbroke anytime they wish!

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Testimonials

Sarah Hanson, Deputy Head Great Malvern Primary, Great Malvern, Worcestershire

There are four words that stick in my mind following this event; excellence, achievement, confidence and pride. Our school serves a deprived catchment area, with 92% of families being rated at the highest levels of deprivation on ACORN scale. For me the greatest achievement of the week was in terms of pupil confidence and engagement. We feel very hopeful that Arts Insight would be able to return year on year as we believe that these positive impacts are only the beginning of what could be achieved in terms of personal skills and the development of confidence. Due to the deprived area that we serve and lack of funding available in Worcestershire we are largely dependent on the generosity of charitable donations.

Lasting Outcomes:

- Total pupil engagement
- Raised confidence for a very wide range of pupils
- Opportunity for challenging pupils to be fully included and to give and receive praise
- Opportunities for pupils to surprise and challenge themselves
- Teamwork, co-operation and collaborative skills for a real purpose
- Parental pride and a sense of achievement
- Raised confidence for staff who also took on different roles including both teachers and assistants
- Producing something of an extremely high quality in a very short time period
- Opportunities to work with professional musicians, actors and film crew
- Composing an original piece of music
- Developing new and positive relationships by working in cross year group teams and with new adults
- Creating positive memories and a deeper understanding that skills other than literacy and numeracy are valued and useful
- A wider understanding of the world of work

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Testimonials

Simon Bannister, Assistant Head Teacher

St Anne's Community Special School, East Yorkshire

I am writing on behalf of the school to thank you for the wonderful week we had with Arts Insight just prior to half term. Thank you for the wonderful week we had with Arts Insight. Our pupils reap huge benefits from drama and music, especially in developing communication skills and they absolutely loved being involved in a project such as this. We were astonished with the tireless enthusiasm you brought to the school and the efforts you went to get to know our pupils and include them in every aspect of the performance. You really made yourselves part of the school and immersed yourself in the day-to-day life here. We were also amazed with what you managed to achieve in a short space of time, as were the many parents who came to support our production. Their feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The theme in linking friendship with the Olympic torch was inspired and resulted in the pupils and students making some brilliant props to use in the show. The fact that our pupils and students made some original music and performed it live is a huge achievement and it was extremely gratifying to witness how focused they were in practising for the big day. We wouldn't hesitate in recommending Arts Insight to other institutions and you will always be welcome here at St Anne's.

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Testimonials

Gillian Drinkwater, Deputy Head Teacher

Thomas Fairchild Community School, Hackney, London

Another huge thank you from us all at Thomas Fairchild Community School. We really enjoyed working with you and Peter this week. The parents were blown away by the performances of their children, as we were too.

Please pass on our congratulations and thanks to the team for the hard work and commitment that you gave us in those packed 2 days. Our children love performing and it was great that they had this opportunity to show themselves and others, what they are capable of. Hope we can work with you again.

Some wonderful feedback from the children:

"I think both of you were amazing, thank you for teaching us, thank you." CHARLIE.

"I thought it was great when Stunt Man Sam said "2 words: totally awesome!!" RUSHANE.

"Thank you for teaching us, we all really appreciate the experience." TYI.

"I really enjoyed the performance it was fantastic, everyone was having fun." HELIN.

"I really had fun rehearsing for the musical performance and it looked like the parents liked it too." OZKEUN.

"It was so amazing!!" DYLAN.

"I was really amazed. I loved it." GISELA.

"I really liked it because parents and classes came to see us and we had lots of fun." RASINA.

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Testimonials

Children from years 4 and 5
Hethersett VC Junior School, Norfolk

"Thank you for making us rock stars!" MICHAEL

"It's been lovely having you. I hope you liked the amazing, fantastic show. I hope you see us another time!" JOSHUA

"Thank you music heroes... I loved the Game of Life!" SAM

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Testimonials

Philip Salisbury, Deputy Head Teacher
Fieldview Primary, Wolverhampton

Just wanted to say a big thank you for the show and work you did on Monday. The children and staff all enjoyed it immensely and thought it was brilliant.

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Testimonials

Samantha Sharp, Year 6 Teacher

Warley Primary, Essex

Firstly, I want to say thank you sooo much again! I can't believe how great the show was after just 2 days with the children! It was so beneficial so we really appreciate it.

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Testimonials

Philippa Agate, Headteacher

St Cecilia's Catholic Junior School, Liverpool

St Cecilia's school is situated within an area of high deprivation and economic disadvantage. Often communities from such areas have little or no aspiration to better themselves and also self-esteem can be at an all time low. With this in mind it was decided to choose "The game of life" from the Arts Insight show repertoire, as the play to perform. The main theme being you should follow your dreams and through hard work and dedication any thing is possible.

The whole experience provided by Laura and her team was nothing short of magnificent. The show itself was a huge success, a real wow factor for the children and their families and especially for me in my first year of headteaching helping cement the community and put our school on the map. Even now over a year on, the children talk about that week when they were encouraged to follow their dreams and be proud. Thanks to Laura and her crew it was an experience the whole community will treasure for the rest of their days and the impact it had on the community was to allow them to believe anything is possible with hard work, dedication and teamwork. Thank you to all who made this possible, a truly remarkable experience for all concerned.

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Testimonials

Robina Maher, Deputy Headteacher

St Mary Magdalen's Junior Catholic School, Willesden Green, London

"Arts Insight provided our children with a very special and memorable experience when, after only a handful of rehearsals, they put on an enthusiastic, spectacular performance. They were encouraged to believe in themselves as performers, and the audience was astounded with the way in which our children worked together in song and movement to produce an entertaining piece of theatre. The performance was of a very high standard and, at the same time, the children were obviously having a great time.

All our children speak of how much fun they had both in rehearsals and during the performance, and how the experience has made them more confident at speaking out in front of other people.

It is obvious to see just how much our children have gained from this experience."

Quotes from the children:

"Epic! Great experience and gave me a buzz as everyone came to watch me."

"Once in a lifetime opportunity to work with professional people who were easy to understand; they really helped me to express my feelings and emotions physically."

"All children should be able to get this brilliant experience."

"I enjoyed the improvisation and this experience improved my acting and singing skills."

"We were given friendly and supportive help so we felt secure to try things out until we got them right and were able to feel that we had done our best."

"We believed in ourselves because they believed in us, they kept on pushing us to get it right."

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Testimonials

Jenny Carlyle, Class Teacher

Pulham Church of England Primary School, Norfolk

We had a fantastic day, the children loved it. The show was not only fun, but educational and it also offered high quality INSET for the staff members observing. The day focused on building the children's confidence, discipline (needed to produce the play), working as a team, as well as singing and acting techniques. The best thing about the day was seeing the classes work together with a common aim, the professionalism Arts Insight demonstrated definitely rubbed off on the children.

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Testimonials

Andrew Rigby, Headteacher

Winton Primary School, Kings Cross, London

At a time when school's are constantly (and rightly) striving to raise levels of literacy and numeracy and meet the latest government targets, it would be all too easy to forget that the scope of human potential is vast – and to have the opportunity to cultivate a wide range of skills and talents from an early age is what makes a truly 'great' education filled with memorable experiences, rather than simply a good one where children learn the basic skills.

After 18 months of significant change and rapid school improvement in the fundamentals of schooling, such as literacy and maths, we were keen that our children should be given an amazing creative opportunity to explore the Arts – but as is often the case with such things, finding the right opportunity is not always easy, and it certainly felt beyond the limits of my own dubious ability to play 'Happy Birthday' on the xylophone.

So I will always be immensely thankful to have discovered Arts Insight. It seemed too good to be true: a 5 day workshop during which the curriculum would be suspended, whilst we transformed the school into a production company and staged a full-on musical with costumes, props and show-tunes.

After our first meeting with Laura Berridge, artistic director of Arts Insight, my initial excitement began to turn into a belief that it could actually happen – her passion, enthusiasm and (always important to avoid headteacher headaches) organisation were all impressive from the beginning. She was flexible to the context of the school, and ambitious about what could be achieved – exactly what we were looking for.

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Andrew Rigby, Headteacher

Winton Primary School, Kings Cross, London

Working with both Laura and Fergal (the musical director) throughout the five days was a fantastic experience – and it also brought the best out of the staff team, who really enjoyed running the various departments of our new production company (photography, costume, props etc). The whole school singing was led by Laura and Fergal and brought a whole new dimension to expectations for singing that we have as a school. Before we knew it, we were hitting high notes, harmonising and starting to look like genuine contenders for the West End. The passion that both Laura and Fergal brought to the whole week was infectious for both myself and the rest of the staff; and most importantly it gave our children real ‘belief’ in what they could really achieve.

Of course, it's all about the final show – and the final show was magnificent! If we hadn't known something special had been achieved, then the arrival of the Mayor of Islington would have surely been a clue. Of course, his presence had nothing to do with me – it was due to the persistent efforts of two pupils in the publicity department who had been phoning and emailing Town Hall on a daily basis to try to get him along to the show!

It was worth it! Children came together and delivered the best and most ambitious performance we have ever put on as a school. Parents and guests were overwhelming in their praise and we have been left with something that a completed worksheet in a textbook can never reproduce. We have been left with a lasting memory.

It did not simply give children the opportunity to fulfill their potential, it helped them to re-define it: to discover skills, interests and talents they might not have even been fully aware of were it not for this great opportunity! And for that, I will always be very thankful for this experience – and for the many more joint ventures that we hope to have with Arts Insight into the future.

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Testimonials

Jackie Sinclair, Class Teacher

Dean Park Primary School, Edinburgh

This opportunity gave the children the chance to show their true talents, particularly the children who don't normally have a chance to shine. They all grew in confidence and contributed 100% to all the activities. The best thing was seeing the children having fun and seeing them being given the confidence to project their voices and strut their stuff on stage – even the most timid pupils.

It aided the curriculum with excellent objectives including making them responsible citizens, effective contributors, confident individuals and successful learners.

There was nothing I would have changed about the day, it was all fantastic, every single child loved it from start to finish, it was brilliant. Thank you for a wonderful experience for all. The pupils and staff had a great time.

Pam Watson, Deputy Head

Dean Park Primary School, Edinburgh

I would like to congratulate you for presenting our pupils with a wonderful day of drama, music and fun. The quality of your delivery and the passion with which you motivated our learners was excellent. The children learned skills in projection, memorising lines and singing. They were completely involved in the whole production process and having only one day to do this showed their real commitment in working in through their breaks. Their enjoyment was obvious for all to see and the staff working with you thoroughly enjoyed the whole day. They felt they had also learned much from the experience. It was Curriculum for Excellence at its best. I also spoke to parents at the end of the performance who were amazed at what had been done in the day and delighted to see children thriving who were previously quite shy. Please forward this testimonial to your trustees as we could not praise you enough and would be absolutely thrilled to be nominated for a further project.

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Testimonials

Mrs Ruth Anstee, Deputy Head

St Margaret's Junior School, Whitnash, Leamington Spa. Warwickshire.

A huge thank you from all of the Year 6 team and children at St. Margaret's for your hard work at our school last week. We (the staff) were blown away with what you managed to create with the children in such a short space of time.

The children thoroughly enjoyed the experience. Motivated by your hard work and energy, the children really threw themselves into their roles and worked so well together as a team. I can't believe how quickly the children learnt their lines and were so enthusiastic about resourcing costumes and props.

The staff learnt as much as the children did about piecing together a performance – and what a fantastic opportunity for us to observe the children! Particularly those who don't always shine in a classroom environment/standard type lesson. It was a valuable opportunity for the Year 6 staff to watch how Laura and Fergal developed the production and pieced it all together – and also allowed them a rare opportunity to take a step back and observe the children's behaviour, attitude and talents. Last year, at St. Margaret's, we were awarded the Gold Arts Mark, but working with 'Arts Insight' has allowed our Year 6 children the exciting opportunity to work side-by-side with lead professionals in a way we have never been able to offer our children before. This is of significant importance in enhancing our creative arts curriculum for all involved. 'Arts Insight' enabled the children to create, evolve and perform a cross-curricular themed piece of musical theatre on the theme of 'Aspirations'; something which children, staff and parents all thoroughly enjoyed.

Just another huge thank you to 'Arts Insight' for working with our school – especially, Laura and Fergal for all of their hard work, energy and enthusiasm that inspired and motivated the children to create and perform such a terrific performance. This is something we are sure that the children will remember for a very long time and hold as a highlight of their time in Year 6.

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Testimonials

Sarah Folkard, Deputy Head

St Peter's C.E. Academy. Raunds. Northamptonshire

Arts Insight came into school for a two-day musical workshop with Year 5. We were completely involved with the planning progress and I really feel that the musical was bespoke to the school. On arrival, Laura and Fergal met us with enthusiasm and energy that carried on for the whole two days. One of the teachers likened them to Duracell bunnies!!!! Their professionalism and drive motivated the children, even some children that have never shown any dramatic/musical skills before! There was so much productive noise and energy coming from the hall!!!! Parents were invited for the final show...wow!!!! It was unbelievable that a musical could be put together in one and a half days. The children showed teamwork, determination and perseverance. Parents thoroughly enjoyed themselves and the children wanted Laura and Fergal back the next week!! Thank you so much to Art Insight, Laura and Fergal!!!!

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Testimonials

John Bickerdike, Head of Music

Manor School, Raunds. Northamptonshire

This 2 day project exceeded my expectations in all areas. Laura and Fergal's relentless enthusiasm, encouragement and ambition spread to the children almost instantly and made the ambitious project seem possible.

Using Yr 10 musicians from Manor school provided them with a challenge that they had not experienced before. Fergal was able to very quickly pitch his creative ideas at a level that was accessible and achievable for them. The use of this live band appeared to excite the cast and added an even more professional appearance to the performance.

Laura's delivery style reflected years of experience working in the performing arts whilst still covered the essential teaching skills and expectations that the children are used to.

Fergal reinforced the importance of key vocal and musical skills throughout both days which resulted in a level of performance that was remarkably high for the amount of preparation time.

I am certain that each and every child benefitted from the cleverly structured script that allowed all children to feel very much a part of the performance with their own individual lines whilst also allowing certain children, who excelled during the auditions, to take on a more major role in the show. The casting by Laura and Fergal ensured that all the students were suitably challenged depending on their performing confidence.

There is no doubt that the meaning of the show was relayed to the children and the message of aspiration and keeping trying to achieve was reflected in each and every cast member's performance.

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Testimonials

John Bickerdike, Head of Music Manor School, Raunds. Northamptonshire

The atmosphere within rehearsals, during the actual performance and the post-performance feedback from the teachers and parents reflected a group of students that had been engaged, excited and through the outstanding coaching by Laura and Fergal presented a remarkable show.

I would have no hesitation in inviting Arts Insight back to work with a different year group later in the year.

Comments from the musicians:

"I found working with Fergal fun, interesting and a real pleasure. I was able to work with people I had never worked with before and thought it went really well"

"I thought the experience was very interesting and the actors were really entertaining!"

"I thought working with a very talented musician was very good and I learnt a lot of new things. He was a pleasure to perform beside"

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Testimonials

Mr Lucas. Year 4/5 Teacher

Brockworth Primary Academy, Brockworth, Gloucestershire.

This workshop was a fantastic opportunity for all our children as it improved confidence and team work. The process ensured the children had a disciplined and committed approach of working to a deadline. Overall it was a great chance to spend an extended period working on a project from scratch to performance. We all particularly enjoyed the energy and passion of the Arts Insight team, the piano playing was wonderful especially during the fun vocal warm-ups. The best thing was the highly relevant and appropriate theme of aspirations which was explored in a way that every second was filled with activity. Keep up the good work!

Children's comments:

"I never thought I would want to perform in front of everyone, I was really proud of myself"

"The songs were great, I've been singing them at home."

"It was way better than I thought it would be, I loved the dance routines!"

"Can we do it again?"

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Testimonials

Irene Warbuton, Drama Specialist Dore Primary School, Sheffield.

The children had a truly amazing time. They worked exceptionally well; they developed and enhanced their drama and singing skills. They all developed in their confidence, concentration, focus and cooperation. And they all worked together to produce a striking and excellent performance. They really enjoyed performing to their school, teachers and parents. They felt really proud, and it will make life long memories for them. In my opinion the best thing about this event was the excellent drama and music facilitators, they were outstanding and inspirational! They encouraged and inspired 60 year 6 children to produce a superb and poignant performance in just 2 days! And the performance was stunning, I was so proud of the children! The project worked really well alongside our creative curriculum. It aided and enhanced our drama, music and history curriculum. It also inspired all the children to gain in their self-esteem and confidence. As well as learning in a creative and moving way about the sadness and the poignancy of Remembrance Day and WW1. All of excellent quality and effectiveness! Thank you so much, the Head teacher and Deputy were also impressed, delighted and proud.

Comments from the children:

I liked it when we acted out receiving the telegram and loved it when we did the drama in the battle song and when we all played soldiers, it was really cool.

I really, really enjoyed it all and how we all put lots of effort into it. I really liked the mix of drama and music.

I thought it was amazing, fun, exciting and incredible. We learn so many skills, I enjoyed every minute, it was the best experience ever.

I loved it so much, my fav bit was being on the radio!

I really enjoyed the performance, especially the songs. Thank you so much, I learnt a lot and the show was a real confidence booster.

I really enjoyed doing the drama with you. My favourite part was when we did the battle song and the acting in the family scenes. I would love to do it again with you.

I really enjoyed the singing, especially as I have never been a strong singer. The acting was fun too, the whole thing was a great tribute to the soldiers.

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Testimonials

Tom Carte, Deputy Head Teacher Ibstock Junior School

Recently our Year 4 children were lucky enough to be given the opportunity to work with Arts Insight, led by Laura Berridge. Over just two days, children learnt a wonderfully-scripted and choreographed play about the Great War.

It's fair to say that the children 'wowed' the audience, which included their parents and the rest of the school. The children were clearly hooked, inspired and thoroughly engaged in the project. Arts Insight, which included a splendid pianist, have excellent standards; these were reflected by the passion showed by our children in their performance. It was apparent that children had significantly developed in confidence over the two days; many of the children now want to be actors!

At the end of the performance, the school community gave an overwhelming amount of praise to staff and the children. Parents commented on how wonderful the acting was, in particular the volume at which the children spoke – in front of an audience.

I can't praise Laura highly enough for her organisation and efforts – I would highly recommend Arts Insight to other schools. Thank you once again for a brilliant experience!

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Testimonials

Miss Sarah Hunter, Year 4/5 Teacher

Barmston Village Primary School, Sunderland, Tyne and Wear.

The children learnt about having responsibility and being professional which is particularly important for the children at our school. This gave our children the chance to shine when they might usually shy away in class. It definitely developed the confidence of a lot of the children. The best thing about the event were Laura and Fergal, the fact that they had such high expectations of the children made the show a huge success. The energy they brought was fantastic. Year 4 and 5 have a topic all about the environment, so this has made it a lot more interactive and enjoyable, all the staff thought it was fantastic! We would like to say a really big thank you, this was very beneficial for the children.

Children's comments:

Entertaining, brilliant, fun!

We learnt how to sing better and be more confident.

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Testimonials

Miss Csepcsanyi, Year 5 teacher

Lickhill Primary School. Stourport on Severn, Worcestershire.

This workshop built confidence, gave the children an appreciation of play scripts and production. Allowed them to gain an understanding of the hard work, dedication and commitment required for a professional musical and most of all allowed all the children to have fun. The best thing in my opinion about the event was 100% the outcome! The parents, pupils, teachers and cast LOVED every moment of the performance. The energy of both Laura and Fergal was OUTSTANDING! The children were enthused and engaged in the project at all times – thank you. The music was phenomenal too. Please come back again!!

Children's comments:

I thought it was the best play I have ever done. Eleanor Year 5

This was a great fun team-player act. Milan Year 4

It was great, I loved every moment of it. Lauren Year 4

Mrs Jane Lloyd, Acting Head of School and SENCo

Lickhill Primary School. Stourport on Severn, Worcestershire.

What an amazing opportunity it was for our children at Lickhill Primary School (Worcestershire) to take part in the musical in 2 days with Arts-Insight. The energy and enthusiasm from the team was incredibly high, which ignited our year 4 and 5 students and brought out their acting and singing skills to such a high quality.

Their musical focused on "Aspirations" certainly had a huge impact, not only on the participating children, but on the audience of children, parents and staff alike! Watching every single child focused, animated and acting and singing together was a cherished hour, which will stay with us for a very long time. The parents' comments have been sensational and they too were overwhelmed by their children's achievements in such a small space of time.

I would highly recommend the team – lead by Laura Berridge. They knew exactly how to get the best from our children and taught them skills which will support them throughout their learning and for many years to come. The materials were catchy, full of humour and fun and the whole audience were able to join in too!

What an incredible event. We will definitely be in touch again to develop more opportunities for such performances in the future. Thank you so very much!!!

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Testimonials

**Ms Carly Marsden. Headteacher.
Nanpean Primary School. Cornwall.**

I am writing to say a massive thank you for the spectacular 2 day workshop Arts Insight did with all of our Key Stage 2 children on the 21st and 22nd November 2013. The show was an unbelievably huge success; not only did the children thrive from the experience but the staff and the community gained a great deal from it too.

Both Laura and Fergal had an immensely positive energy. Our community, including Stephen Gilbert (local MP) were amazed at how you incorporated the three main performing arts disciplines of singing, drama and dance to create a spectacular musical about Healthy Lifestyles.

I was particularly astonished with how you captured the children's attention instantly and developed their imagination and creativity, whilst promoting teamwork, dedication and self-belief. Because of this our children demonstrated their unbelievable talents and you have certainly raised the bar for us! Thank you again. We hope to work with you in the future – hopefully a 5 day workshop next time!

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Testimonials

Joy Radford. Head of Music Northcott Special School, Hull

Thank you so much for inspiring both children and staff at Northcott Special School. From the moment we met to confirm planning for the two days, you showed enthusiasm, dedication and commitment to your work.

Before you met the pupils we discussed group dynamics and individuals within the classes. I was impressed to see, as the workshops and rehearsals progressed, that you had remembered all this information which enabled you to approach each child with awareness and sensitivity to their needs, strengths and vulnerabilities.

Over fifty pupils from Class 6 through to Year 9 were included in this event. Your pace and challenge was impressive. You instinctively pitched at the right level, and the content delivered was relevant and exciting. You provided opportunities for all the pupils to achieve their personal best.

I was impressed by your hard work and dedication, never once taking a break. The children also noticed this, and as a result they too gave their very best. You told them that hard work creates results, and you showed them too, leading by example. A great deal was achieved in just two days. Both process and final product were first class!

In my music lessons since your visit, children have been reminding me about important life skills. To hear Class 6 pupils retell the importance of good communication, determination, imagination and self belief has been rewarding.

A special moment came at the end of the Performance when a Year 10 girl in the audience insisted on asking you a question on stage. 'Can I really be whatever I want to be?'

You are talented and professional practitioners. Thank you for teaching us so much about drama and music, as well as sharing and enabling our pupils to understand the merits of a positive culture. I will build on your work at the school, and in the meantime, I hope that you will be able to return to Northcott School.

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Testimonials

Mrs Julia Slocombe, Headteacher

Castlewood Primary School, Southwater, West Sussex

"Thanks again to both of you for a brilliant two-day workshop at Castlewood School. One parent has already reported back that their child was making sure their older brother was now turning off lights around the house and singing the words of the song as a result of the performance. Many parents spoke to me at the end of the performance to say how impressed, they were at such an amazing performance achieved after a two-day workshop.

All staff commented on the energy and passion that you brought to our school during working on our performance. Staff were amazed at how engaged all Yr 4 and Yr 5 pupils were for the 2 days and how powerful the singing was and the effect of some simple movement and actions- getting a message across to the audience.

Staff felt that all pupils had developed their confidence and professionalism in performing skills. The workshop was very focused and brilliantly organised over the two days. The music was fantastic, particularly having live music. Curriculum aspects covered – Drama, music, dance, global citizenship, speaking and listening, science. Excellent behavioural management of pupils and inspiration to all.

The pupils loved the opportunity of doing something different, re focusing over 2 days and then performing to their parents and other pupils. I now been approached by many Yr 3 pupils who watched the performance and asked me if they would be able to have a two-day workshop next year as they had enjoyed it so much. I pupil asked for a copy of the music as they wanted to start learning it in their piano lessons.

Thanks again for this amazing experience. If there was ever an opportunity to work with you again in the future we would be delighted."

Kirsty Anstee-Brown, Support Teacher

Castlewood Primary School, Southwater, West Sussex

"We have noticed a huge boost in all our pupils' confidence during the 2 day course, but there is one child in whom we've seen an enormous change. This particular pupil has found some aspects of school challenging; social interaction with groups of peers and adults can be difficult. However, since embarking upon the Arts Insight workshop, they have been a different child: full of enthusiasm, passion and most importantly, they have had a permanent smile on their face, thoroughly enjoying every moment. Thank you."

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Testimonials

Lutece Bernard, Year 5 Teacher

St Peter's Methodist Primary School, Canterbury, Kent.

I am amazed at how much was achieved in only two days. The workshop was so well organised, Laura and Fergal were such good leaders and held the attention of the children for every minute of the workshop.

I could see over the course of the workshop an obvious improvement in the children's confidence. It brought many of them out of their shell.

Year 5 have been writing play scripts of a fable they wrote. This workshop was perfectly timed because it showed them the reality of a play.

Comments from the children:

"It's much funner than lessons" Iris

"It's really interesting for people who haven't done this before" James

"We got a chance to perform in front of others and overcome our stage fright"

JASMINE

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Testimonials

Laura Miley, Teacher

St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School, Salford.

I just want to say thanks so much for the last 2 days. It was absolutely fantastic and all the staff were amazed with how powerful it was. The children loved it too and these are the 2 year groups that are quite difficult in our school. Seeing them perform like that today was inspirational and I just wanted to congratulate and thank you for everything you did.

Please, please please keep us in mind for anything else you have as we would love to be a part of such an amazing initiative you have created.

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Testimonials

Andrew Rigby, Headteacher **Winton Primary School, Islington, London**

Just over a year ago, after two years of rapidly improving the school, we found ourselves looking for ways to expand on our achievements and give our children an amazing opportunity in the performing arts. When the opportunity to work with Arts Insight came along, it was too good to miss. Our work with Arts Insight gave children a brilliant and unique opportunity, not simply to fulfil their potential, but to discover new talents that otherwise simply would not have been tapped into. In only 5 days, they put on the best musical show that we had ever experienced and our children had produced something of which they could be truly proud.

When the opportunity to work with both Laura and Fergal came along again a year later, it was too good to pass up – and the result was better than we could have imagined.

The first thing that was immediately noticeable was how much better and more confident our children were as a result of our first experience. Since our first show we had already set the standard higher for every performance we had done at school – and this showed in how our children composed themselves and the confidence they showed from the very first audition. The chance to work with Laura and Fergal again meant that they were able to take this performance to the very next level. This time we were also able to add professional lighting, a sound system and a smoke machine to give our children an even more professional experience of performing. Parents and guests were once again overwhelming in their praise and we have been left with something another lasting memory and an amazing experience that e Winton will continue to benefit from for as everyone at Winton will remember for a very long time.

I am tremendously grateful to Arts Insight for their energy, imagination and ambition – for the way in which they give us not only an amazing experience over 5 days, but also for the way the support us to raise the bar in performing arts for all of our pupils for the following year. We are now determined to build on this even further – and we are already planning on a change of venue to a professional drama theatre and even more ambitious staging for next year's production.

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Testimonials

**Tamzin Watterson and Pam Wallace Year 4 Class Teachers
Hawarden Village Church School, Flintshire, North Wales.**

This workshop provided a very professionally led opportunity for the children to do something we normally do but on a larger scale. It addressed skills in the national curriculum in a very enjoyable way.

Thanks to all who led the workshop, I was amazed by the children's performance after such a short amount of time.

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Testimonials

Alison Maynard, Head teacher.

Lancasterian Primary School, Tottenham, London.

ALL pupils were included in the process and felt that they had a part to play, which is brilliant for school cohesion and the partnership between Lancasterian and the Vale School. They had a sense of pride and commitment to the work they were involved in and especially in the amazing outcome.

It was an excellent platform for pupils to able to apply the BLP skills – reciprocity, resourcefulness, resilience and being reflective.

The quality of learning, and standard of the production were extremely high. The inclusive nature of the week was fantastic. The team of adults working with the children were very talented, the material being used was well pitched and had a valuable appropriate message. It brought out the very best in children including some pupils with challenging behaviour.

The project enabled pupils to apply their literacy and numeracy skills in a purposeful way. There was an incredible opportunity for those with creative skills to shine, including those with performance skills.

As mentioned, the pupils were able to develop their ability to work in a team and all those life skills that are so crucial and generic. Meeting deadlines was modelled perfectly.

I met someone this week who met the mayor and her wife. They were singing our praises!! I have so much positive feedback from staff, Vale colleagues, pupils and parents about the production! The energy and absolute passion that was communicated was infectious. You and David Rees are a brilliant team in that respect. Thank you again!

Gillian Weale, Deputy Head teacher and Sarah McLay, Head teacher.

The Vale Special School, Tottenham, London

Laura presented the idea of a collaborative Arts project with Key Stage 2 pupils in such a clear and enthusiastic way that we did not hesitate to say we were on board!!

The preparation for the project was impeccable. There was a strong emphasis on collaboration from all parties-the children from the two partnership schools, the teachers from both schools as well as the Art Insight project leaders. Laura communicated high expectations of everyone and clear goals and processes.

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This was a project unlike any other we have engaged in, where a whole week was exclusively dedicated to the components needed to produce a high class performance and in which our pupils (with a range of special needs) and the whole of a two form entry KS2 mainstream school worked harmoniously and relentlessly as equal partners.

Laura and her team were inspirational in their daily assemblies with staff and pupils, ensuring consistently high participation from all pupils and staff. Although we had a script to work to (The Game of Life) the script allowed pupils to excel in the areas they were working on and drew on their creative talents, so we had impressive gymnastics, singing, joke-telling, rapping and dancing. There were roles in this project for everyone-including opportunities to act, dance, sing, make costumes, take photographs, advertise the event, make tickets and programmes (to name a few!) From point of view at Vale school, we were able to see pupils develop in their self-esteem over the week, we saw relationships developing between pupils from the partnership schools and the legacy is that these relationships are flourishing now that the project has finished! The week was an opportunity for us to shine with our Makaton signing skills and share this with all the pupils and staff. This really was an ambitious, inclusive, creative project with a clear message about doing our very best!

We thank Laura and her team, Lancasterian and Vale staff (who were so inclusive) and all of the pupils who were able to show us just how outstanding they all are!!

Catherine Williams and colleagues.

The Vale/Belmont Special School, Tottenham, London

The Vale children had an amazing experience participating in the workshops. They enjoyed the final production and all felt that they had made a significant contribution. It developed their teamwork skills and the concept of working towards a finished product within a specified timeframe.

In my opinion the best thing about the experience was the opportunity for Vale children to work with other pupils at a different school and develop their social communication skills and confidence. They also learnt skills in photography, media and presentation.

Our staff enjoyed the teamwork aspect, the fact that children had to cooperate in order to achieve their goals. They said that the production was amazing – they saw the children's confidence increase over the week.

The children learnt and developed skills that they can take away from the project. One of our parents has brought her son a camera as he greatly enjoyed being a photographer for the week.

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Testimonials

Deby Ruddock, Music Coordinator

Crowfoot Community Primary School, Beccles, Suffolk.

We asked for an aspirational theme as the children come from poor economic groups and are in need of different opportunities. They were thrilled to be selected and enjoyed every moment of the experience. They are still talking about it 3 weeks on.

In my opinion the best thing about the event was giving our children a special chance to be part of a creative process. It allowed them to perform, sing and act with confidence and in front of a supportive audience.

This project aided us in our provision of the national curriculum, as it explored most themes on the PSHE curriculum. It also enabled them to explore the 'hidden' curriculum vital for character building, especially for those children without much faith in a positive future.

The energy and vitality that Laura and Ross brought to our school was infectious. Everyone who walked past the hall through the day commented on how wonderful it sounded.

Children's Comments:

- Being treated like an adult
- Experiencing being a performer
- Being made to feel special

In their own words:

Thank you so much for coming into our school because you have changed me. I never liked reading anything out in class but when I played the professor it made me come out of my shell. When you helped me learn the songs in 2 days, it will help me remember things from previous days lessons. Please whenever you have a chance come back to our school. Thank you!!

ISABELLE E

This is to say thank you for letting me join in with the group, I am happy I come. I enjoyed the dance routine the best because I liked all the actions. I also loved the songs, they made me feel excited and happy. It was lovely meeting you both, you helped me to feel confident and believe in myself. I hope to meet you again. P. S Thanks to you I am going to join drama club.

MAX BORTON

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Testimonials

Mrs Annemarie Whittle, Head teacher

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Tonbridge. Kent

Thank you so much for the fabulous two days you spent with your team at St Margaret's. The children greatly enjoyed every moment of learning and performing 'Captain Health'. The whole school, the parents and the Mayor were very impressed with the fantastic production.

I have had considerable feedback from parents saying that their children have claimed these two days as the 'best in their life' and we certainly saw the impact your work had on our children. You, Dan, Robine and Fiona are highly talented and we are most grateful for the time you spent with us. Thank you once again.

Emma Barnes, Class Teacher

St Margaret Clitherow Catholic Primary School, Tonbridge. Kent

In my opinion the best thing about the event was the energy and enthusiasm from Arts Insight. They inspired the children to put in the effort to produce a professional production. The children loved the warm-up activities, singing and acting. The year 5's are preparing for a residential trip in May and this was a great start for their team building. It has inspired us to include more drama in the classroom.

Children's Comments:

What did you learn from the workshop?

- Helped with stage fright
- Confidence
- Discovered new talents
- Drama skills
- Stage presence
- Projection of singing and speaking voice
- Concentration
- Patience
- Inspiration to take up singing, dancing and acting

In their own words:

These past two days were very inspiring and gave me the opportunity to be more confident on stage. I really enjoyed all of the warm-ups; my favourite was 'Bungalow'. The benefit was we got our brains working and we were concentrating. I really enjoyed the songs, but I found it quite hard

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to learn them all in one night, although it was a good challenge, I enjoyed it. I am really glad that our year got to do the musical. I thought that Laura was very talented in that she managed to direct the play and lead it. I thought that Robine had an amazing voice and was good for confidence, and Dan on the piano doing all the sound effects – just thinking them up out of nowhere. And last but not least Fiona for making the play actually happen at our school. I really enjoyed it.

ANNA MASSEY, YEAR 5/6 EB

In the beginning I was shocked by the idea of doing a production in front of the Mayor, my mum had only told me a couple of minutes before.

I really enjoyed working beside the other year 5's and a few year 4's, especially Laura who was the director, Dan who I thought was the best pianist in the whole world, Robine who was always in a good mood and finally Fiona who made this whole story possible.

During our time of learning the songs, we learnt all of them in one day, they were both fantastic songs which I experienced. They were very catchy, because afterwards I heard lots of people humming the tune and even singing bits and pieces of each song aloud. My favourite song was Captain Health.

I also enjoyed the warm-ups, my favourite was the Opposites Game, say for instance Laura would say "Go, go go, go go" we would say "STOP!!" Tongue twister: "What a to do to die today, today at a twenty to two" and the final one 'Bungalow'.

And the final thing...ACTING! At the start auditions for parts, I did one for child 1, I did it in front of all my year group, and that's not my talent, I did not even realise what a big part it was. I get really shy in front of people who don't live in the same house as me.

I was really out of my comfort zone, I liked Laura because of her enthusiasm and how she went straight away back to do it again and again until you got it right.

Throughout my school life I have had a lot of stage fright, but I have learnt with Laura's help, to use my fear to make me feel better.

ANONYMOUS, YEAR 5

Over the past few days year 5 and 4 were given the opportunity to take part in a play called Captain Health, which I really enjoyed.

It was great fun and everyone really enjoyed it. I couldn't believe that we had learnt the words of

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the songs in just 1 day! I liked the auditions because it was amazing to see how some people, who at first were really shy, would then just start speaking and amaze everyone.

It was great doing the warm-ups and I thoroughly enjoyed the game "Opposites", after warm-ups we learnt songs and got to hear who got the speaking parts. After lunch we ran through the play before it was time to go home. What I think went well was the actual performance and I think it went well because everyone was aware of what was happening and knew when it was their turn to stand up, when it was their cue and knew their lines inside out.

The play benefitted me by helping improve my drama skills and confidence, I am especially proud of how I found out that I have a loud voice. I've learnt that eating healthy and exercising is very important, but once in a while a treat, staying up late or having a fizzy drink is ok too.

Thank you Arts Insight for giving us this amazing opportunity.

EMMA WESSELS, YEAR 5.

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Testimonials

Catherine Endson, Senior Leader St John Fisher Primary Academy, Derby

We were so very impressed not only with the children's final production, but with all of the activities throughout the two days. It was evident from the production that the children had gained so much in confidence and perseverance and your delivery was integral to this. From the outset you engaged and motivated the children and your skill in directing them resulted in superb performances from even the most reluctant of our pupils – all in two days. The comments from parents were also glowing.

Many thanks for the positive impact you have had on our pupils and I hope we will be able to welcome you here at St John Fisher again in the future.

Children's Comments:

What did you enjoy about the Arts Insight workshop?

- The people who came to teach – their expertise was really good for the performance and the energy from them was great.
- Auditioning for the parts – having the choice of which part you wanted.
- The singing and dancing – fun, energetic.
- Escapism – time out from the stresses of SATs etc.
- The songs – the lyrics and the rhythm of them.
- The whole thing – the build up during rehearsals and the performing and it felt more professional.
- Laura's motivation.
- A chance to show your talents and skills to the rest of the school.

What did it make you think about?

- Learning about life skills and thinking about how we do need them in our lives.
- The future and jobs we want to do when we are older.
- Considered going into a career in acting.
- If you put your mind to something you can achieve it!
- Life skills.
- Working together allows us to achieve.

What did you learn from the workshop?

- Never give up.

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- Hard work really does pay off.
- If you put your mind to it, you can do anything.
- To be more confident.
- We are capable of more than we think.
- To express myself and project my voice.
- To never give up on anything
- How to mime with expression,
- To try my best and have confidence in everything that I do.

Any other comments...

Laura and Dan were great, a real credit to themselves. Come back again please. The whole experience was amazing.

Miss Rowley, Miss Curtis and Miss Williams – Class Teachers St John Fisher Primary Academy. Derby

In our opinion the best thing about this event was watching the children's enthusiasm and willingness to join in, watching them learn skills from professionals and clearly benefiting from this experience. All the children were involved and the behaviour management of the children was fantastic.

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Testimonials

**Danielle Abbott, Mark Stenton and Angela O'Hagan, Year 6 Teachers
St Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School, Salford.**

Arts Insight delivered a unique and exciting production that brought the absolute best out of every child. They saw the potential in each individual, allowing the children to showcase their range of talents. They were professional, enthusiastic and dynamic – what a team!

We would highly recommend Arts Insight. Thank you Laura and Dan – amazing!

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Testimonials

Andrew Rigby, Headteacher
Winton Primary School, Islington, London

What is the point of coming to school?

This is perhaps a question we should ask of ourselves more often. If it is simple utility, then I would say we do a good enough job of providing our pupils with the skills they need to become literate, numerate, thoughtful human beings. But if school has a deeper purpose for us as people given how many years of our childhood we spend there, then it is worth asking what that could look like? If we care about connecting with each other in meaningful ways, as living, breathing human beings who are capable of achieving great things, then the challenge of schooling is both more exciting and more difficult. But not impossible.

Especially not when you are able to provide memorable experiences of such excitement and ambition as the past week we have spent once again working with the Arts Insight team and transforming the school into a production company to stage a musical in only 5 days.

This is our third year of working with Laura Berridge, through this unique model for promoting performing arts in school. What I particularly love about the model is that there is nothing fluffy about it at all; and for all the benefits of engaging in the process, it is nevertheless outcomes driven. All the benefits of team-work, critical thinking and problem-solving are very much alive throughout the week – as pupils increasingly learn the skills they need to succeed in their various departments – but if pupils don't seriously focus on coming up with a high quality final product then the show at the end of the week is dead in the water. There is something important actually at stake in this process. Not unlike real life, actually.

Having had the fortune of working with Laura for three years, the overall knock-on effect since the first year, and the hugely positive impact on pupil's confidence in performing, has been fantastic. I have been completely bowled over by the level at which children in all of the departments have risen to the challenge. From costume, to props, to publicity, to the cast – every single contribution mattered and contributed to the show. And then, of course... there is the show itself.

It was spectacular! It truly blew me away to watch pupils of primary school age thrive and perform with such zest for life, technical skill and confidence. Whatever else these pupils remember about their time at primary school... I am quite certain they will remember this. I can't be more thankful for the work that Laura and her team have done with us over the past 3 years. It has genuinely made a difference.

Fingers crossed and much excitement for next year!!!

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Testimonials

Paul Cronin – Headteacher

St Laurence's Catholic Primary School, Kirkby, Liverpool

St Laurence's Catholic Primary School is situated within an area of high deprivation and economic disadvantage. Often communities from such areas have little or no aspiration to better themselves and also self-esteem can be at an all time low. With this in mind it was decided to choose "Circus de Respect" from the Arts Insight show repertoire, as the play to perform. The theme demonstrated the importance of tolerance and respect for others. A hugely important topic! The whole experience provided by Laura and Fergal was nothing short of magnificent. To produce such a high quality production involving 200 children in 4 days was amazing. The show itself was a huge success, a real wow factor for the children and their families. Our children are still talking about it and will do so for a long time to come. The impact was immense. The children learnt that anything is possible through teamwork, dedication and hard work.

A huge thank you to Rathbones for sponsoring such a hugely successful and inspirational project.

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