



## partnerships for schools

This case study looks at how The Roseland Community College has become a hub of creative learning and practice for the community, at regional, national and international levels.

### Key project information

**School:** The Roseland Community College

**Age range:** 11-16

**No. of students:** 615

**Location:** Rural

**School type:** Community School

**Specialisms:** Music with English

**Free school meals:** 6 per cent

**Ofsted:** Good with Outstanding features, Spring 2008

**Local authority:** Cornwall

# Cultural learning and the impact of partnership working

## Background

The Roseland Community College is a Specialist College for Music with English. By using its key strengths it has become a hub of creative learning and practice not just for the local community but also at regional, national and international levels.

The college has a striking geographic location on a peninsula about 20 minutes drive from Truro. Its isolation makes the school very important as a social hub. Although one of the smallest secondaries in the county it has a 150 square mile catchment area so students have to travel extensively to reach school. There is limited social and ethnic diversity in Cornwall, so community cohesion is another significant school goal. Close community relationships and collaborations, a committed leadership team and a genuine desire to explore and support individual development through personalised learning, new pedagogy and continuing staff development have all contributed to the school's creative approach.

Creativity and cultural learning have been key elements of The Roseland Community College's ethos and vision for a number of years. This approach has been developed through a combination of the curriculum, their specialism, staff expertise, and student learning and opportunities, as well as the qualifications and courses that are on

offer. The vision has been strengthened through numerous creative partnerships, demonstrating the value of the creative industries in supporting the curriculum experience.

The Roseland Community College is a good example of how partnerships and opportunities can help to embed creativity within the philosophy and practice of a school.

## Project description

The Roseland Community College uses the word 'creativity' in its widest sense, encompassing the arts, sport, the environment (they have a community farm), science and enterprise. They aim to support young people to employ ingenuity, imagination and hard work across all areas of learning and life. The college has a global outlook and interests and also aims to act as a local hub for entertainment, enterprise and learning, relevant and appropriate for all ages.

This balance is achieved through the delivery of two clearly defined approaches:

- working towards International School Status; and
- undertaking extensive and continuous outreach work with their nine primary schools.

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At a local and regional level, the school is well connected with community groups and Cornwall-wide learning and cultural programmes. The school has a strong track record in participating in national programmes and initiatives run by cultural organisations such as the Rambert Dance Company, London Sinfonietta and the Royal Opera House. They also link to international projects, including working with choirs from Russia and Africa, and are one of 30 Creative Partnerships Schools of Creativity<sup>1</sup>.

The Roseland chose their specialisms (Music and English) because as two of their strongest subjects they were raising standards school-wide, and there were Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) in both subjects already in post. The leadership team knew that being a music college would help them to develop the creative and emotional intelligence of their students and they felt that a focus on English and literacy would assist with communication.

The Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SSAT) is interested in documenting the outcomes from The Roseland Community College's appointment of a music development officer. This role is open ended so that it can be creative and entrepreneurial, exploring extra-curricular timetabling and seeking out new opportunities. The range of activities delivered in the school as a result suggest that this approach could represent a highly successful model, creating a chain reaction of positive, structured and supported change.

The music development officer develops strong links with local musical festivals and other schools, making a coordinated approach possible. For example, all the performing arts colleges in Cornwall were able to take part in a Royal Opera House project that saw the students who went to see Carmen having a tour of the theatre in order to give them a professional perspective of the creative industries.

## Developing creativity

The Roseland Community College feels passionately about supporting and recognising an active and meaningful student voice. Students are involved in curriculum planning, development and delivery.

The Roseland also believes in showing students the different career pathways available within the creative industries. The level of interest shown by students in creative careers has led to the creation of a number of media internships based on the OCR National Award in Media, which was originally aimed at gifted and talented students who were focused on media (producing content, developing and designing games, etc). In 2009 a group of Roseland's media interns put on a photography exhibition in the local town as part of the course and sold numerous pieces of work.

The 14-19 Creative and Media Diploma is led by The Roseland Community College over three other college sites on a rolling, collaborative basis. Sixty-eight students (36 in Year 11 and 32 in Year 10) currently take the course and explore both performance and production. Students who are interested in working in the creative industries, but not as performers, engage with the entire creative process and develop appropriate skills, including technical, stagecraft and management functions. The school reports that moderators for the diploma were pleased with the quality of work to date.

Roseland understands that exploratory approaches to learning require experimentation with staff deployment and the curriculum. Timetables across humanities, English and art were collapsed to enable students to collaborate with a range of professionals including a geologist, historian and Methodist minister. Key Stage 4 provision is enhanced by a partnership with a local special school that offers Dance GCSE. Students are guaranteed a quality of teaching through this partnership that resulted in 100 per cent of the first cohort achieving grades A to C. This course is gaining in popularity, with 21 students enrolled from September 2009.

The school also acts as a hub for all kinds of activities, partnerships and resources. At a fashion show, where a local band provided music, the students presented their own textiles work and choreographed and performed a dance piece.

Kevin Gritton, Deputy Headteacher at Roseland said: "If you want to be creative, you've got to build quality time to plan, and we have invested heavily in being able to plan, with a teaching staff, five teaching assistants and a group of students, even so, our time is very pressured."

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These efforts bear fruit: in 2009, 65 per cent of students obtained at least 5 A\* to C GCSEs including maths and English against a county average of 44 per cent and a national average of 48 per cent. 75 per cent gained at least five A\* to C GCSEs excluding maths and English.

The geographic isolation of the Roseland Community College has caused it to reach out even further than most schools yet they have managed to maintain a balance between looking beyond their own horizons and to being a focal point and active participant in their closest communities.

The leadership team and all teachers are committed to constant development of the curriculum, their own pedagogy and approaches to learning. This case study explores two of the projects they are working with: Learning Detectives and Enquiring Minds<sup>2</sup>.

## Learning Detectives

The Learning Detectives project at Roseland involves students investigating what makes a successful learner. Forming part of the Student Voice project, Learning Detectives was initially a pilot, closely linked to and developed with Penair School, a nearby science college. There are now at least 12 primary and secondary schools creating Learning Detectives across Cornwall and in other parts of the country. Roseland is already collaborating with them and has taken their Learning Detectives to a Children's Conference organised by Cornwall County Council Consultants.

Learning Detectives have been working in the school since 2006, and their work has featured in the DCSF publication *Schools which go the extra mile*. The detectives are Year 8 students who are appointed for one academic year to investigate learning and share their findings with staff, governors and other students. They teach lessons on learning as part of the Personal, Social, Health and Economic (PSHE) programme in Year 7.

They have also worked in partnership with Learning Detectives from Penair School observing learning in each other's schools and jointly presenting to other Cornish schools through running workshops at conferences and presentations to trainee teachers at Truro College.

## Enquiring Minds

Enquiring Minds started with Year 7 in September 2009, and required a move from a transmission<sup>3</sup>

### How the Learning Detectives work

Learning Detectives at The Roseland Community College observe learning in lessons, in pairs, with observation sheets that identify and track the good learning they see. During the lesson, the Detectives talked to students about their learning and how they learn best.

Afterwards, the Detectives collate an 'evidence' sheet, share this with other Learning Detectives and agree findings. This is then shared with the staff, other students, parents and governors.

Learning Detectives in Year 8 ran a staff meeting as they would like their lessons to be taught, making use of music, colour and shapes. Learning Detectives have also devised a toolkit for students to use when considering different ways of learning:

- Lego, to signify joined-up thinking;
- a SpongeBob to signify the way that students absorb learning; and
- a mirror for reflecting.

For more information about Learning Detectives, see [www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/learning-detectives-learning-to-learn-2662](http://www.teachingexpertise.com/articles/learning-detectives-learning-to-learn-2662)

pedagogy to an enquiry<sup>4</sup> pedagogy. Kevin Gritton, Deputy Headteacher, is excited about the fact that the adults in the school have become facilitators in the learning process and is looking forward to exploring the topics that have been agreed with students across the coming three terms:

- Beach
- Global cultures across the world
- Sky

The first three enquiries have had students telephoning and mailing NASA and the Met Office, among others, to answer questions such as 'Why is Mars red?' and 'Can I reach the end of a rainbow?'

The team are currently developing a 'Music of the World' enquiry which will be launched by World Music Day and a series of workshops. The goal is that, by the end of the cycle, learners can apply the new skills developed through the four stages of the programme to any subject.

Option groups and collapsing timetables are regularly used as a way to enhance the students' learning opportunities. Blocking subjects in groups used to cause conflict of options, so from autumn

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## The Enquiring Minds Cycle

### Stage 1: Initiating and eliciting

An Enquiring Minds lesson begins with students generating ideas for subjects they want to pursue.

### Stage 2: Defining and responding

This is all about making connections – categorising, comparing and compiling information. Students create a solid starting point for their enquiry and make a plan to research it further.

### Stage 3: Doing and making

This is where students research, design and construct in order to make a contribution in their chosen enquiry. It's usually the longest stage of an enquiry project.

### Stage 4: Communicating, presenting and evaluating

In this stage, students have the opportunity to create a showcase for the work they have been doing – to share their new knowledge and understanding with others.

2009 the timetable has been designed with greater flexibility so that students can, for example, focus on dance, drama and music together.

## Roseland Radio

The Roseland Community College has a radio station with professional level equipment for interviewing, recording, editing and broadcasting. The school is embedding the use of this facility into the curriculum and making it part of the lessons on a gradual basis with Year 7 students now having radio induction sessions.

Strong partnerships and support from local radio stations, Pirate FM and Atlantic FM, give students extra opportunities to learn from successful professionals and hone their own skills. A Year 10 student won the 2009 Music Entertainment Award at the *Sony Awards for Schools Radio*, a national award, which is open to all schools across the UK. "The students get a real buzz that the radio station is 'live'. I saw a group of them following the roving reporters around at lunchtime the other day." said Wendy Polley, Roseland's Music Development Officer.

Running a live radio station is also good practice for broadcasting performances and interviews. For example, when the composer Howard Goodall came down to lead a session with GCSE Music students the whole session and an interview was recorded. "It was only when we sat down to pull together our Artsmark<sup>5</sup> application that we realised how far we've come on our journey." commented Wendy Polley.

## Conditions for success

The Roseland Community College's progress and achievements are effective because the overall vision is rooted in the idea of music as a universal language and realised through a creative curriculum, a wide range of qualification options and the right tools to encourage independent and personalised learning. The key elements for success are:

- The Roseland Community College constantly reflects and learns from experience, and this applies to both staff and students.
- The staff embraces change and is constantly moving forward with the students as they explore new ways of transforming education and opportunities.
- The school has planned for workforce and staff development alongside student and curriculum development.
- Ideas are encouraged and supported by the leadership team so that creativity is not filtered top-down.
- The Roseland Community College has progressed because of staff investment, supporting creative change, change management and development.
- The Roseland Community College has a worldwide view with very local roots, supported by the use of existing infrastructures and ICT.
- Creativity can unleash new funding, sponsorship, friendships and mutually beneficial partnerships.

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## Potential pitfalls

- The focus needs to remain student-centred, with opportunities for staff development to support student learning. Maintaining this on a consistent and coherent basis requires commitment and vision.
- Truly productive and mutually supportive partnerships work best when ideas come from everyone involved: from staff, students, community groups and individuals. These ideas need to be valued, nurtured and supported by the leadership team and key stakeholders, managers and leaders in general.

## Key contact

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## References

1. This initiative from Creative Partnerships enables a number of leading schools to engage in cutting-edge practice. They develop innovative programmes with other schools and play a pivotal role in the strategic leadership of creative projects.
2. Enquiring Minds is an approach to teaching and learning developed by Futurelab that takes students' ideas, interests and experiences as its starting point, and provides them with more responsibility for the direction and content of their learning.
3. In a transmission pedagogy, the teacher has most of the knowledge and transmits it to students.
4. In an enquiry pedagogy, students are assumed to have some knowledge already, which can be built upon with the support of teachers.
5. Artsmark is a national award scheme that recognises schools with a high level of provision in the arts.