

## Project case study - Ceredigion (2007-8)

### Partners

School: Plascrug school, Aberystwyth (reception class)

Gallery: Aberystwyth Arts Centre (various exhibitions including several with an animal theme)

Artist: Ruth Jên Evans (printmaker)

### Project aims

- To explore how exhibitions could provide starting points for developing skills across all seven areas of the foundation phase curriculum
- To develop children's personal learning and thinking skills; their independence, confidence and ability to solve problems
- To encourage collaboration and communication between children
- To develop children's ability to evaluate and reflect on their own learning
- To explore ideas and approaches that would inspire staff across the school
- To document a model of good practice that could be disseminated by the local authority to other Foundation Phase settings

### Project summary

Children made visits to several exhibitions at the arts centre, interspersed with sessions in school. The theme of animals emerged as a key interest, so the group also visited a display of taxidermy at the local museum. Activities included painting, printmaking, working with clay and making ephemeral drawings from junk materials. Children were given increasing freedom to choose what they wanted to do and there was natural flow into the school's outdoor spaces. The teacher and artist all took an active role in documenting the children's learning journeys.





### Outcomes

The project exemplified how a school, gallery and an artist can work together effectively to provide children with exciting learning opportunities across the Foundation Phase curriculum.

With the teacher and an art specialist, this was an opportunity to develop children's skills in new areas. Being given responsibility for making choices, solving their own problems and using 'grown up' equipment were also important in developing children's personal and social skills.



*'I asked the group to be in charge of rolling out a long piece of paper on a windy day. The children had to work out ways of keeping the paper on the ground.'*

The project valuably contributed to children's knowledge and understanding of the world, by extending their knowledge of animals, both real (dead and alive!) and as represented in art and photography.



*'The children were fascinated with the stuffed animals at the museum. Many seemed to know they were dead, but weren't scared, more interested.'*

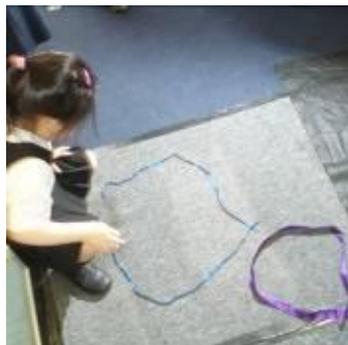
Speaking and listening were motivated by the children's imaginative responses to the exhibitions and the process of making their own work.

*'The children were constantly using language as they were working.'*

*Now I've made a crust colour, the other one had white.  
This colour is Vontritter, because it's got three colours in it'*



Opportunities for mathematical development were effectively integrated into activities by the teacher and artist. Shape and sorting were recurring themes.



The class teacher had valued working creatively alongside an artist and had gained new ideas about facilitating children's creative thinking.

*'Ruth was brilliant at questioning and getting ideas from the children.'*

The artist had developed an in depth understanding of the Foundation Phase approach.

*'I have learned that an exhibition can be used to stimulate all aspects of education. This project has given me confidence in being prepared to let things develop in ways I hadn't anticipated.'*

For the gallery education officer, the project had reinforced how valuable their resources could be for a very young age group.

### **Learning from the project**

A wealth of ideas about working successfully with young children around gallery visits and art works was generated by the project. Findings from across the projects are collated in the *engage in the foundation phase toolkit*.